



The Waverley Novels by
Sir Walter Scott

Kenilworth
Fair Maid of Perth



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INTRODUCTION TO KENILWORTH

No scandal about Queen Elizabeth, I hope ?

The Critic.

A CERTAIN degree of success, real or supposed, in the delineation of Queen Mary, naturally induced the Author to attempt something similar respecting 'her sister and her foe,' the celebrated Elizabeth. He will not, however, pretend to have approached the task with the same feelings, for the candid Robertson himself confesses having felt the prejudices with which a Scotsman is tempted to regard the subject, and what so liberal a historian avows, a poor romance writer dares not disown. But he hopes the influence of a prejudice almost as natural to him as his native air will not be found to have greatly affected the sketch he has attempted of England's Elizabeth. I have endeavoured to describe her as at once a high-minded sovereign and a female of passionate feelings, hesitating betwixt the sense of her rank and the duty she owed her subjects on the one hand, and on the other her attachment to a nobleman who, in external qualifications at least, amply merited her favour. The interest of the story is thrown upon that period when the sudden death of the first Countess of Leicester seemed to open to the ambition of her husband the opportunity of sharing the crown of his sovereign.

It is possible that slander, which very seldom favours the memories of persons in exalted stations, may have blackened the character of Leicester with darker shades than really belonged to it. But the almost general voice of the times attached the most foul suspicions to the death of the unfortunate countess, more especially as it took place so very opportunely for the indulgence of her lover's ambition. If we can trust Ashmole's *Antiquities of Berkshire*, there was but too much ground for the traditions which charge Leicester with the murder of his wife. In the following extract of the passage, the reader will find the authority I had for the story of the romance —

in the said house, of which this is the story following:

Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, a very goodly personage, and singularly well featured, being a great favourite to Queen Elizabeth, it was thought, and commonly reported, that, had he been a bachelor or a plebeian, the Queen would have made him her husband, to this end, to free himself of all obstacles, he commands, or perhaps, with fair, flattering entreaties, desires his wife to repose herself here at his servant Anthony Forster's house, who then lived in the aforesaid manor-house, and also prescribed to Sir Richard Varney (a prompter to this design), at his coming hither, that he should first attempt to poison her, and if that did not take effect, then by any other way whatsoever to despatch her. This, it seems, was proved by the report of Dr Walter Bayly, sometime fellow of New College, then living in Oxford, and professor of physic in that university, who, because he would not consent to take away her life by poison, the earl endeavoured to displace him the court. This man, it seems, reported for most certain that there was a practice in Cannon among the conspirators to have poisoned this poor innocent lady a little before she was killed, which was attempted after this manner — They seeing the good lady sad and heavy (as one that well knew by her other handling that her death was not far off), began to persuade her that her present disease was abundance of melancholy and other humours, etc., and therefore would needs counsel her to take some potion, which she absolutely refusing to do, as still suspecting the worst, whereupon they sent a messenger on a day (unawares to her) for Dr Bayly, and intreated him to persuade her to take some little potion by his direction, and they would fetch the same at Oxford, meaning to have added something of their own for her comfort, as the doctor upon just cause and consideration did suspect, seeing their great importunity, and the small need the lady had of physic, and therefore he peremptorily denied their request, misdoubting (as he afterwards reported) lest, if they had poisoned her under the name of his potion, he might after have been hanged for a colour of their sin, and the doctor remained still well assured that, this way taking no effect, she would not long escape their violence, which afterwards happened thus. For Sir Richard Varney above said (the chief projector in this design), who, by the earl's order, remained that day of her death alone with her, with one man only and Forster, who had that day forcibly sent away all her servants from her to Abington market, about three miles distant from this place — they (I say, whether first stifling her or else strangling her) afterwards flung her down a pair of stairs and broke her neck, using much violence upon her, but, however, though it was vulgarly reported that she by chance fell downstairs (but still without hurting her hood that was upon her head), yet the inhabitants will tell you there that she was conveyed from her usual chamber where she lay to another where the bed's head of the chamber stood close to a privy postern door, where they in the night came and stifled her in her bed,

bruised her head very much, broke her neck, and at length flung her downstairs, thereby believing the world would have thought it a mischance, and so have blinded their villany. But behold the mercy and justice of God in revenging and discovering this lady's murder, for one of the persons that was a coadjutor in this murder was afterwards taken for a felony in the marches of Wales, and offering to publish the manner of the aforesaid murder, was privately made away in the prison by the earl's appointment, and Sir Richard Varney, the other, dying about the same time in London, cried miserably, and blasphemed God, and said to a person of note (who hath related the same to others since), not long before his death, that all the devils in hell did tear him in pieces. Forster, like wise, after this fact, being a man formerly addicted to hospitality, company, mirth, and music, was afterwards observed to forsake all this, and with much melancholy and pensiveness (some say with madness) pined and drooped away. The wife also of Bald Butter, kinsman to the earl, gave out the whole fact a little before her death. Neither are these following passages to be forgotten, that as soon as ever she was murdered, they made great haste to bury her before the coroner had given in his inquest (which the earl himself condemned as not done advisedly), which her father, or Sir John Robertsett (as I suppose), hearing of, came with all speed hither, caused her corpse to be taken up, the coroner to sit upon her, and further enquiry to be made concerning this business to the full, but it was generally thought that the earl stopped his mouth, and made up the business betwixt them, and the good earl, to make plain to the world the great love he bare to her while alive, and what a grief the loss of so virtuous a lady was to his tender heart, caused (though the thing, by these and other means, was beaten into the heads of the principal men of the University of Oxford) her body to be reburied in St Mary's church in Oxford with great pomp and solemnity. It is remarkable, when Dr Babington (the earl's chaplain) did preach the funeral sermon, he tript once or twice in his speech, by recommending to their memories that virtuous lady so *piti-fully murdered*, instead of saying *piti-fully slain*. This earl, after all his murders and poisonings, was himself poisoned by that which was prepared for others (some say by his wife) at Cornbury Lodge before mentioned (though Baker in his chronicle would have it at Killingworth), anno 1588 '1

The same accusation has been adopted and circulated by the author of *Leicester's Commonwealth*, a satire² written directly against the Earl of Leicester, which loaded him with the most horrid crimes, and, among the rest, with the murder of his first wife. It was alluded to in the *Yorkshire Tragedy*, a play erroneously ascribed to Shakspeare, where a rake, who determines to destroy all his family, throws his wife downstairs, with this allusion to the supposed murder of Leicester's lady

¹ Ashmole's *Antiquities of Berkshire*, vol 1 p 140. The tradition as to Leicester's death was thus communicated by Ben Jonson to Drummond of Hawthornden. — The Earl of Leicester gave a bottle of liquor to his lady which he willed her to use in any faintness which she after his returne from court, not knowing it was poison, gave him, and so he died. — Ben Jonson's *Information to Drummond of Hawthornden*, MS — Sir Robert Sibbald's copy.

² This satire was written by the notorious Jesuit, Robert Parsons and was largely copied by Ashmole in his *Antiquities*. These authorities were perhaps too much relied upon by the Author (*Laing*).

INTRODUCTION TO KENILWORTH

The only way to charm a woman's tongue
Is, break her neck — a politician did it

The reader will find I have borrowed several incidents as well as names¹ from Ashmole and the more early authorities, but my first acquaintance with the history was through the more pleasing medium of verse. There is a period in youth when the mere power of numbers has a more strong effect on ear and imagination than in more advanced life. At this season of immature taste the Author was greatly delighted with the poems of Mickle and Langhorne, poets who, though by no means deficient in the higher branches of their art, were eminent for their powers of verbal melody above most who have practised this department of poetry. One of those pieces of Mickle, which the Author was particularly pleased with, is a ballad, or rather a species of elegy, on the subject of Cumnor Hall,² which, with others by the same author, were to be found in Evans's *Ancient Ballads* (vol. iv p 130), to which work Mickle made liberal contributions. The first stanza especially had a peculiar species of enchantment for the youthful ear of the Author, the force of which is not even now entirely spent, some others are sufficiently prosaic

CUMNOR HALL

The dews of summer night did fall ;
The moon, sweet regent of the sky,
Silver'd the walls of Cumnor Hall,
And many an oak that grew thereby

Now nought was heard beneath the skies,
The sounds of busy life were still,
Save an unhappy lady's sighs,
That issued from that lonely pile.

'Leicester,' she cried, 'is this thy love
That thou so oft has sworn to me,
To leave me in this lonely grove,
Immured in shameful privy ?

'No more thou comest with lover's speed,
Thy once beloved bride to see,
But be she alive, or be she dead,
I fear, stern earl, 's the same to thee.

¹ See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol vi pp 266, 294

² See Note 1

'Not so the usage I received
When happy in my father's hall,
No faithless husband then me grieved,
No chilling fears did me appal

'I rose up with the cheerful morn,
No lark more blithe, no flower more gay,
And, like the bird that haunts the thorn,
So merrily sung the hivelong day

'If that my beauty is but small,
Among court ladies all despised,
Why didst thou rend it from that hall,
Where, scornful earl, it well was prized ?

'And when you first to me made suit,
How fair I was you oft would say !
And, proud of conquest, plucked the fruit,
Then left the blossom to decay

'Yes ! now neglected and despised,
The rose is pale, the lily's dead,
But he that once their charms so prized,
Is sure the cause those charms are fled

'For know, when sick'ning grief doth prey
And tender love's repaid with scorn,
The sweetest beauty will decay, —
What floweret can endure the storm ?

'At court, I'm told, is beauty's throne,
Where every lady's passing rare,
That Eastern flowers, that shame the sun,
Are not so glowing, not so fair

'Then, earl, why didst thou leave the beds
Where roses and where lilies vie,
To seek a primrose, whose pale shades
Must sicken when those gauds are by ?

'Among rural beauties I was one,
Among the fields wild flowers are fair,
Some country swain might me have won
And thought my beauty passing rare

'But, Leicester (or I much am wrong),
Or 'tis not beauty lures thy vows,
Rather ambition's gilded crown
Makes thee forget thy humble spouse

'Then Leicester, why, again I plead
(The injured surely may repine) —
Why didst thou wed a country maid,
When some fair princess might be thine ?

INTRODUCTION TO KENILWORTH

'Why didst thou praise my humble charms,
And, oh ! then leave them to decay ?
Why didst thou win me to thy arms,
Then leave to mourn the livelong day ?

'The village maidens of the plain
Salute me lowly as they go ,
Envious they mark my silken train,
Nor think a countess can have woe

'The simple nymphs ! they little know
How far more happy 's their estate ,
To smile for joy — than sigh for woe —
To be content — than to be great

'How far less blest am I than them,
Daily to pine and waste with care !
Like the poor plant, that, from its stem
Divided, feels the chilling air

'Nor, cruel eail ! can I enjoy
The humble charms of solitude ,
Your minions proud my peace destroy,
By sullen frowns or pratings rude

'Last night, as sad I chanced to stray,
The village death-bell smote my ear ,
They wink'd aside, and seemed to say,
"Countess, prepare, thy end is near !"

'And now, while happy peasants sleep,
Here I sit lonely and forlorn ,
No one to soothe me as I weep,
Save Philomel on yonder thorn

'My spirits flag — my hopes decay —
Still that dread death-bell smites my ear ,
And many a boding seems to say,
"Countess, prepare, thy end is near !"

Thus sore and sad that lady grieved,
In Cumnor Hall, so lone and drear ,
And many a heartfelt sigh she heaved,
And let fall many a bitter tear

And ere the dawn of day appear'd,
In Cumnor Hall, so lone and drear,
Full many a piercing scream was heard,
And many a cry of mortal fear

The death-bell thrice was heard to ring,
An acrial voice was heard to call,
And thrice the raven flapp'd its wing
Around the towers of Cumnor Hall

KENILWORTH

CHAPTER I

I am an innkeeper, and know my grounds,
And study them — brain o' man, I study them.
I must have jovial guests to drive my ploughs,
And whistling boys to bring my harvests home,
Or I shall hear no flails thwack.

The New Inn.

IT is the privilege of tale-tellers to open their story in an inn, the free rendezvous of all travellers, and where the humour of each displays itself without ceremony or restraint. This is especially suitable when the scene is laid during the old days of merry England, when the guests were in some sort not merely the inmates, but the messmates and temporary companions, of mine host, who was usually a personage of privileged freedom, comely presence, and good-humour. Patronised by him, the characters of the company were placed in ready contrast, and they seldom failed, during the emptying of a six-hooped pot, to throw off reserve, and present themselves to each other and to their landlord with the freedom of old acquaintance.

The village of Cumnor, within three or four miles of Oxford, boasted, during the eighteenth year of Queen Elizabeth, an excellent inn of the old stamp, conducted, or rather ruled, by Giles Gosling, a man of a goodly person and of somewhat round belly, fifty years of age and upwards, moderate in his reckonings, prompt in his payments, having a cellar of sound liquor, a ready wit, and a pretty daughter. Since the days of old Harry Baillie of the Tabbard in Southwark, no one had excelled Giles Gosling in the power of pleasing his guests of every description, and so great was his fame, that to have been in Cumnor without wetting a cup at the bonny Black Bear would have been to

avouch one's-self utterly indifferent to reputation as a traveller. A country fellow might as well return from London without looking in the face of majesty. The men of Cumnor were proud of their host, and their host was proud of his house, his liquor, his daughter, and himself.

It was in the courtyard of the inn which called this honest fellow landlord that a traveller alighted in the close of the evening, gave his horse, which seemed to have made a long journey, to the hostler, and made some inquiry, which produced the following dialogue betwixt the myrmidons of the bonny Black Bear.—

'What, ho! John Tapster.'

'At hand, Will Hostler,' replied the man of the spigot, showing himself in his costume of loose jacket, linen breeches, and green apron, half within and half without a door, which appeared to descend to an outer cellar.

'Here is a gentleman asks if you draw good ale,' continued the hostler.

'Beshrew my heart else,' answered the tapster, 'since there are but four miles betwixt us and Oxford. Marry, if my ale did not convince the heads of the scholars, they would soon convince my pate with the pewter flagon.'

'Call you that Oxford logic?' said the stranger, who had now quitted the rein of his horse, and was advancing towards the inn door, when he was encountered by the goodly form of Giles Gosling himself.

'Is it logic you talk of, sir guest?' said the host; 'why, then, have at you with a downright consequence—'

The horse to the rack,
And to fire with the sack.'

'Amen! with all my heart, my good host,' said the stranger; 'let it be a quart of your best Canaries, and give me your good help to drink it.'

'Nay, you are but in your accidence yet, sir traveller, if you call on your host for help for such a sipping matter as a quart of sack, were it a gallon, you might lack some neighbourly aid at my hand, and yet call yourself a toper.'

'Fear me not,' said the guest, 'I will do my devoir as becomes a man who finds himself within five miles of Oxford, for I am not come from the field of Mars to discredit myself amongst the followers of Minerva.'

As he spoke thus, the landlord, with much semblance of

heartily welcome, ushered his guest into a large low chamber, where several persons were seated together in different parties — some drinking, some playing at cards, some conversing, and some, whose business called them to be early risers on the morning, concluding their evening meal, and conferring with the chamberlain about their night's quarters.

The entrance of a stranger procured him that general and careless sort of attention which is usually paid on such occasions, from which the following results were deduced — The guest was one of those who, with a well-made person, and features not in themselves, unpleasing, are nevertheless so far from handsome that, whether from the expression of their features, or the tone of their voice, or from their gait and manner, there arises, on the whole, a disinclination to their society. The stranger's address was bold, without being frank, and seemed eagerly and hastily to claim for him a degree of attention and deference, which he feared would be refused, if not instantly vindicated as his right. His attire was a riding-cloak, which, when open, displayed a handsome jerkin overlaid with lace, and belted with a buff girdle, which sustained a broadsword and a pair of pistols.

'You ride well provided, sir,' said the host, looking at the weapons as he placed on the table the mulled sack which the traveller had ordered.

'Yes, mine host, I have found the use on't in dangerous times, and I do not, like your modern grandees, turn off my followers the instant they are useless.'

'Ay, sir?' said Giles Gosling, 'then you are from the Low Countries, the land of pike and caliver?'

'I have been high and low, my friend, broad and wide, far and near. But here is to thee in a cup of thy sack, fill thyself another to pledge me, and, if it is less than superlative, e'en drink as you have brewed.'

'Less than superlative!' said Giles Gosling, drinking off the cup, and smacking his lips with an air of ineffable relish — 'I know nothing of superlative, nor is there such a wine at the Three Cranes, in the Vintry, to my knowledge, but if you find better sack than that in the Sheres, or in the Canaries either, I would I may never touch either pot or penny more. Why, hold it up betwixt you and the light, you shall see the little motes dance in the golden liquor like dust in the sunbeam. But I would rather draw wine for ten clowns than one traveller. I trust your honour likes the wine?'

'It is neat and comfortable, mine host; but to know good liquor you should drink where the vine grows. Trust me, your Spaniard is too wise a man to send you the very soul of the grape. Why, this now, which you account so choice, were counted but as a cup of bastard at the Groyne or at Port St Mary's. You should travel, mine host, if you would be deep in the mysteries of the butt and pottle-pot.'

'In troth, Signior Guest,' said Giles Gosling, 'if I were to travel only that I might be discontented with that which I can get at home, methinks I should go but on a fool's errand. Besides, I warrant you, there is many a fool can turn his nose up at good drink without ever having been out of the smoke of Old England, and so ever gramercy mine own fireside.'

'This is but a mean mind of yours, mine host,' said the stranger, 'I warrant me, all your town's folk do not think so basely. You have gallants among you, I dare undertake, that have made the Virginia voyage, or taken a turn in the Low Countries at least. Come, cudgel your memory. Have you no friends in foreign parts that you would gladly have tidings of?'

'Troth, sir, not I,' answered the host, 'since ranting Robin of Drysandford was shot at the siege of the Brill. The devil take the caliver that fired the ball, for a blither lad never filled a cup at midnight! But he is dead and gone, and I know not a soldier, or a traveller, who is a soldier's mate, that I would give a peeled codling for.'

'By the mass, that is strange. What! so many of our brave English hearts are abroad, and you, who seem to be a man of mark, have no friend, no kinsman, among them?'

'Nay, if you speak of kinsmen,' answered Gosling, 'I have one wild ship of a kinsman, who left us in the last year of Queen Mary, but he is better lost than found.'

'Do not say so, friend, unless you have heard ill of him lately. Many a wild colt has turned out a noble steed. His name, I pray you?'

'Michael Lambourne,' answered the landlord of the Black Bear, 'a son of my sister's, there is little pleasure in recollecting either the name or the connexion.'

'Michael Lambourne!' said the stranger, as if endeavouring to recollect himself, 'what, no relation to Michael Lambourne, the gallant cavalier who behaved so bravely at the siege of Venlo that Grave Maurice thanked him at the head of the army? Men said he was an English cavalier, and of no high extraction.'

'It could scarcely be my nephew,' said Giles Gosling, 'for he had not the courage of a hen-partridge for aught but mischief'

'Oh, many a man finds courage in the wars,' replied the stranger

'It may be,' said the landlord, 'but I would have thought our Mike more likely to lose the little he had.'

'The Michael Lambourne whom I knew,' continued the traveller, 'was a likely fellow went always gay and well-attired, and had a hawk's eye after a pretty wench.'

'Our Michael,' replied the host, 'had the look of a dog with a bottle at its tail, and wore a coat every rag of which was bidding good-day to the rest.'

'Oh, men pick up good apparel in the wars,' replied the guest

'Our Mike,' answered the landlord, 'was more like to pick it up in a frippery warehouse, while the broker was looking another way, and, for the hawk's eye you talk of, his was always after my stray spoons. He was tapster's boy here in this blessed house for a quarter of a year, and between misreckonings, miscarriages, mistakes, and misdemeanours, had he dwelt with me for three months longer, I might have pulled down sign, shut up house, and given the devil the key to keep'

'You would be sorry, after all,' continued the traveller, 'were I to tell you poor Mike Lambourne was shot at the head of his regiment at the taking of a sconce near Maestricht?'

'Sorry! it would be the blithest news I ever heard of him, since it would ensure me he was not hanged. But let him pass, I doubt his end will never do such credit to his friends, were it so, I should say (taking another cup of sack), "Here's God rest him," with all my heart.'

'Tush, man,' replied the traveller, 'never fear but you will have credit by your nephew yet, especially if he be the Michael Lambourne whom I knew and loved very nearly, or altogether, as well as myself. Can you tell me no mark by which I could judge whether they be the same?'

'Faith, none that I can think of,' answered Giles Gosling, 'unless that our Mike had the gallows branded on his left shoulder for stealing a silver candle cup from Dame Snort of Hogsditch'

'Nay, there you be like a knave, uncle,' said the stranger, slipping aside his ruff, and turning down the sleeve of his

doublet from his neck and shoulder, 'by this good day, m. shoulder is as unscarred as thine own'

'What, Mike, boy — Mike!' exclaimed the host, 'and is it thou in good earnest? Nay, I have judged so for this half-hour, for I knew no other person would have taken half the interest in thee. But, Mike, an thy shoulder be unscarred as thou sayest, thou must own that Goodman Thong, the hangman, was merciful in his office, and stamped thee with a cold iron'

'Tush, uncle, truce with your jests. Keep them to season your sour ale, and let us see what hearty welcome thou wilt give a kinsman who has rolled the world around for eighteen years, who has seen the sun set where it rises, and has travelled till the west has become the east'

'Thou hast brought back one traveller's gift with thee, Mike, as I well see, and that was what thou least didst need to travel for. I remember well, among thine other qualities, there was no crediting a word which came from thy mouth'

'Here's an unbelieving pagan for you, gentlemen!' said Michael Lambourne, turning to those who witnessed this strange interview between uncle and nephew, some of whom, being natives of the village, were no strangers to his juvenile wildness. 'This may be called slaying a Cumnor fattened calf for me with a vengeance. But, uncle, I come not from the husks and the swine-trough, and I care not for thy welcome or no welcome, I carry that with me will make me welcome, wend where I will'

So saying, he pulled out a purse of gold, indifferently well filled, the sight of which produced a visible effect upon the company. Some shook their heads, and whispered to each other, while one or two of the less scrupulous speedily began to recollect him as a school-companion, a townsman, or so forth. On the other hand, two or three grave, sedate-looking persons shook their heads, and left the inn, hinting that, if Giles Gosling wished to continue to thrive, he should turn his thriftless, godless nephew adrift again as soon as he could. Gosling demeaned himself as if he were much of the same opinion, for even the sight of the gold made less impression on the honest gentleman than it usually doth upon one of his calling.

'Kinsman Michael,' he said, 'put up thy purse. My sister's son shall be called to no reckoning in my house for supper or lodging, and I reckon thou wilt hardly wish to stay longer, where thou art e'en but too well known'

'For that matter, uncle,' replied the traveller, 'I shall consult my own needs and conveniences. Meantime, I wish to give

the supper and sleeping cup to those good townsmen, who are not too proud to remember Mike Lambourne, the tapster's boy. If you will let me have entertainment for my money, so, if not, it is but a short two minutes' walk to the Hare and Tabor, and I trust our neighbours will not grudge going thus far with me.'

'Nay, Mike,' replied his uncle, 'as eighteen years have gone over thy head, and I trust thou art somewhat amended in thy conditions, thou shalt not leave my house at this hour, and shalt e'en have whatever in reason you list to call for. But I would I knew that that purse of thine, which thou vapourest of, were as well come by as it seems well filled.'

'Here is an infidel for you, my good neighbours!' said Lambourne, again appealing to the audience. 'Here's a fellow will rip up his kinsman's follies of a good score of years' standing. And for the gold, why, sirs, I have been where it grew, and was to be had for the gathering. In the New World have I been, man — in the Eldorado, where urchins play at cherry-pit with diamonds, and country wenches thread rubies for necklaces, instead of rowan tree berries, where the pantiles are made of pure gold, and the paving-stones of virgin silver.'

'By my credit, friend Mike,' said young Laurence Goldthred, the cutting mercer of Abingdon, 'that were a likely coast to trade to. And what may lawns, cypruses, and ribands fetch where gold is so plenty?'

'Oh, the profit were unutterable,' replied Lambourne, 'especially when a handsome young merchant bears the pack himself, for the ladies of that clime are bona-robas, and being themselves somewhat sunburnt, they catch fire like tinder at a fresh complexion like thine, with a head of hair inclining to be red.'

'I would I might trade thither,' said the mercer, chuckling.

'Why, and so thou mayest,' said Michael, 'that is, if thou art the same brisk boy who was partner with me at robbing the abbot's orchard. 't is but a little touch of alchemy to decoct thy house and land into ready money, and that ready money into a tall ship, with sails, anchors, cordage, and all things conforming, then clap thy warehouse of goods under hatches, put fifty good fellows on deck, with myself to command them, and so hoise topsails, and hey for the New World!'

'Thou hast taught him a secret, kinsman,' said Giles Gosling, 'to decoct, an that be the word, his pound into a penny, and his webs into a thread. Take a fool's advice, neighbour Goldthred. Tempt not the sea, for she is a devourer. Let cards and cockatrices do their worst, thy father's bales may bide a banging for

a year or two, ere thou comest to the spital, but thou hath a bottomless appetite — she would swallow the wealth of Lombard Street in a morning as easily as I would a pouched egg and a cup of clary, and for my kinsman's Eldorado, never trust me if I do not believe he has found it in the pouches of some such gulls as thyself. But take no snuff in the nose about it, fall to and welcome, for here comes the supper, and I heartily bestow it on all that will take share, in honour of my hopeful nephew's return, always trusting that he has come home another man. In faith, kinsman, thou art as like my poor sister as ever was son to mother'

'Not quite so like old Benedict Lambourne her husband, though,' said the mercer, nodding and winking. 'Dost thou remember, Mike, what thou saidst when the schoolmaster's ferule was over thee for striking up thy father's crutches? "It is a wise child," saidst thou, "that knows its own father." Dr. Bircham laughed till he cried again, and his crying saved yours.'

'Well, he made it up to me many a day after,' said Lambourne, 'and how is the worthy pedagogue?'

'Dead,' said Giles Gosling, 'this many a day since.'

'That he is,' said the clerk of the parish, 'I sat by his bed the whilst. He passed away in a blessed frame, "*Morior — mortuus sum vel fui — mori*" — these were his latest words, and he just added, "My last verb is conjugated."'

'Well, peace be with him,' said Mike, 'he owes me nothing.'

'No, truly,' replied Goldthred, 'and every lash which he laid on thee, he always was wont to say, he spared the hangman a labour.'

'One would have thought he left him little to do then,' said the clerk, 'and yet Goodman Thong had no sinecure of it with our friend, after all.'

'*Voto a Dios!*' exclaimed Lambourne, his patience appearing to fail him, as he snatched his broad slouched hat appearing table and placed it on his head, so that the shadow from the sinister expression of a Spanish bravo to eyes and features which naturally boded nothing pleasant. 'Harkee, my masters, all is fair among friends, and under the rose, and I have already permitted my worthy uncle here, and all of you, to use your pleasure with the frolics of my nonage. But I carry sword and dagger, my good friends, and can use them lightly too upon occasion. I have learned to be dangerous upon points of honour ever since I served the Spaniard, and I would not have you provoke me to the degree of falling foul.'

'Why, what would you do?' said the clerk.

'Ay, sir, what would you do?' said the mercer, bustling up on the other side of the table.

'Slt your throat and spoil your Sunday's quavering, sir clerk,' said Lambourne, fiercely, 'cudgel you, my worshipful dealer in flimsy sarsenets, into one of your own bales.'

'Come—come,' said the host, interposing, 'I will have no swaggering here. Nephew, it will become you best to show no haste to take offence, and you, gentlemen, will do well to remember that, if you are in an inn, still you are the innkeeper's guests, and should spare the honour of his family. I protest your silly broils make me as oblivious as yourself, for yonder sits my silent guest, as I call him, who hath been my two days' inmate, and hath never spoken a word, save to ask for his food and his reckoning, gives no more trouble than a very peasant, pays his shot like a prince royal, looks but at the sum total of the reckoning, and does not know what day he shall go away. Oh, 'tis a jewel of a guest! and yet, hang-dog that I am, I have suffered him to sit by himself like a castaway in yonder obscure nook, without so much as asking him to take bite or sup along with us. It were but the right guerdon of my incivility were he to set off to the Hare and Labor before the night grows older.'

With his white napkin gracefully arranged over his left arm, his velvet cap laid aside for the moment, and his best silver flagon in his right hand, mine host walked up to the solitary guest whom he mentioned, and thereby turned upon him the eyes of the assembled company.

He was a man aged betwixt twenty-five and thirty, rather above the middle size, dressed with plainness and decency, yet bearing an air of ease which almost amounted to dignity, and which seemed to infer that his habit was rather beneath his rank. His countenance was reserved and thoughtful, with dark hair and dark eyes—the last, upon any momentary excitement, sparkled with uncommon lustre, but on other occasions had the same meditative and tranquil cast which was exhibited by his features. The busy curiosity of the little village had been employed to discover his name and quality, as well as his business at Cumnor, but nothing had transpired on either subject which could lead to its gratification. Giles Gosling, head borough of the place, and a steady friend to Queen Elizabeth and the Protestant religion, was at one time inclined to suspect his guest of being a Jesuit, or seminary priest, of

whom Rome and Spain sent at this time so many to grace the gallows in England. But it was scarce possible to retain such a prepossession against a guest who gave so little trouble, paid his reckoning so regularly, and who proposed, as it seemed, to make a considerable stay at the bonny Black Bear

'Papists,' argued Giles Gosling, 'are a pinching, close-fisted race, and this man would have found a lodging with the wealthy squire at Bessellsley, or with the old knight at Wootton, or in some other of their Roman dens, instead of living in a house of public entertainment, as every honest man and good Christian should. Besides, on Friday, he stuck by the salt beef and carrot, though there were as good spitchcock'd eels on the 'oard as ever were ta'en out of the Isis'

Honest Giles, therefore, satisfied himself that his guest was no Roman, and with all comely courtesy besought the stranger to pledge him in a draught of the cool tankard, and honour with his attention a small collation which he was giving to his nephew in honour of his return, and, as he verily hoped, of his reformation. The stranger at first shook his head as if declining the courtesy, but mine host proceeded to urge him with arguments founded on the credit of his house, and the construction which the good people of Cumnor might put upon such an unsocial humour

'By my faith, sir,' he said, 'it touches my reputation that men should be merry in my house, and we have ill tongues amongst us at Cumnor — as where be there not? — who put an evil mark on men who pull their hat over their brows as if they were looking back to the days that are gone, instead of enjoying the blithe sunshiny weather which God hath sent us in the sweet looks of our sovereign mistress, Queen Elizabeth, whom Heaven long bless and preserve'

'Why, mine host,' answered the stranger, 'there is no treason, sure, in a man's enjoying his own thoughts under the shadow of his own bonnet? You have lived in the world twice as long as I have, and you must know there are thoughts that will haunt us in spite of ourselves, and to which it is in vain to say, "Begone, and let me be merry"'

'By my sooth,' answered Giles Gosling, 'if such troublesome thoughts haunt your mind, and will not get them gone for plain English, we will have one of Father Bacon's pupils from Oxford to conjure them away with logic and with Hebrew. Or, what say you to laying them in a glorious red sea of claret, my noble guest? Come, sir, excuse my freedom. I am an old host,

and must have my talk. This peevish humour of melancholy sits ill upon you it suits not with a sleek boot, a hat of a trim block, a fresh cloak, and a full purse. A pize on it! send it off to those who have their legs swathed with a hay-wisp, their heads thatched with a felt bonnet, their jerkin as thin as a cobweb, and their pouch without ever a cross to keep the fiend Melancholy from dancing in it. Cheer up, sir! or, by this good liquor, we will banish thee from the joys of blithesome company into the mists of melancholy and the land of little-case. Here be a set of good fellows willing to be merry, do not scowl on them like the devil looking over Lincoln.'

'You say well, my worthy host,' said the guest, with a melancholy smile, which, melancholy as it was, gave a very pleasant expression to his countenance—'you say well, my jovial friend, and they that are moody like myself should not disturb the mirth of those who are happy. I will drink a round with your guests with all my heart, rather than be termed a mar-feast.'

So saying, he arose and joined the company, who, encouraged by the precept and example of Michael Lambourne, and consisting chiefly of persons much disposed to profit by the opportunity of a merry meal at the expense of their landlord, had already made some inroads upon the limits of temperance, as was evident from the tone in which Michael inquired after his old acquaintances in the town, and the bursts of laughter with which each answer was received. Giles Gosling himself was somewhat scandalised at the obstreperous nature of their mirth, especially as he involuntarily felt some respect for his unknown guest. He paused, therefore, at some distance from the table occupied by these noisy revellers, and began to make a sort of apology for their license.

'You would think,' he said, 'to hear these fellows talk, that there was not one of them who had not been bred to live by "Stand and deliver", and yet to morrow you will find them a set of as painstaking mechanics, and so forth, as ever cut an inch short of measure, or paid a letter of change in light crowns over a counter. The mercer there wears his hat awry, over a shagged head of hair, that looks like a curly water dog's back, goes unbraced, wears his cloak on one side, and affects a ruffianly vapouring humour, when in his shop at Abingdon, he is, from his flat cap to his glistening shoes, as precise in his apparel as if he was named for mayor. He talks of breaking parks, and taking the highway, in such fashion that you would think he

haunted every night betwixt Hounslow and London, when in fact he may be found sound asleep on his feather-bed, with a candle placed beside him on one side, and a Bible on the other, to fright away the goblins'

'And your nephew, mine host—this same Michael Lambourne, who is lord of the feast—is he too such a would-be ruffler as the rest of them?'

'Why, there you push me hard,' said the host, 'my nephew is my nephew, and though he was a desperate Dick of yore, yet Mike may have mended like other folks, you wot. And I would not have you think all I said of him even now was strict gospel. I knew the wag all the while, and wished to pluck his plumes from him. And now, sir, by what name shall I present my worshipful guest to these gallants?'

'Marry, mine host,' replied the stranger, 'you may call me Tressilian.'

'Tressilian!' answered mine host of the Bear, 'a worthy name, and, as I think, of Cornish lineage, for what says the south proverb—

By Pol, Tre, and Pen,
You may know the Cornish men

Shall I say the worthy Mr 'Tressilian of Cornwall?'

'Say no more than I have given you warrant for, mine host, and so shall you be sure you speak no more than is true. A man may have one of those honourable prefixes to his name, yet be born far from St Michael's Mount.'

Mine host pushed his curiosity no farther, but presented Mr Tressilian to his nephew's company, who, after exchange of salutations, and drinking to the health of their new companion, pursued the conversation in which he found them engaged, seasoning it with many an intervening pledge.

CHAPTER II

Talk you of young Master Lancelot ?

Merchant of Venice

AFTER some brief interval, Master Goldthred, at the earnest instigation of mine host, and the joyous concurrence of his guests, indulged the company with the following morsel of melody —

‘Of all the birds on bush or tree,
Commend me to the owl,
Since he may best ensample be
To those the cup that trowl
For when the sun hath left the west,
He chooses the tree that he loves the best,
And he whoops out his song, and he laughs at his jest,
Then though hours be late, and weather foul,
We'll drink to the health of the bonny, bonny owl.

The lark is but a bumpkin fowl,
He sleeps in his nest till morn,
But my blessing upon the jolly owl,
That all night blows his horn
Then up with your cup till you stagger in speech,
And match me this catch till you swagger and screech,
And drink till you wink, my merry men each,
For though hours be late, and weather be foul,
We'll drink to the health of the bonny, bonny owl.’

‘There is savour in this, my hearts,’ said Michael, when the mercer had finished his song, ‘and some goodness seems left among you yet, but what a bead-roll you have read me of old comrades, and to every man’s name tacked some ill-omened motto ! And so Swashing Will of Wallingford hath bid us good-night ?’

‘He died the death of a fat buck,’ said one of the party, ‘being shot with a cross bow bolt, by old Thatcham, the Duke’s stout park keeper at Donnington Castle.’

‘Ay, ay, he always loved venison well,’ replied Michael, ‘and a cup of claret to boot,’ and so here’s one to his memory Do me right, my masters.’

When the memory of this departed worthy had been duly honoured, Lambourne proceeded to inquire after Prance of Padworth

'Pranced off — made immortal ten years since,' said the mercer, 'marry, sir, Oxford Castle and Goodman Thong, and a tenpenny-worth of cord, best know how.'

'What, so they hung poor Prance high and dry? so much for loving to walk by moonlight! A cup to his memory, my masters, all merry fellows like moonlight. What has become of Hal with the Plume? he who lived near Yattendon, and wore the long feather — I forget his name'

'What, Hal Hempseed?' replied the mercer, 'why, you may remember he was a sort of a gentleman, and would meddle in state matters, and so he got into the mire about the Duke of Norfolk's affair these two or three years since, fled the country with a pursuivant's warrant at his heels, and has never since been heard of'

'Nay, after these baulks,' said Michael Lambourne, 'I need hardly inquire after Tony Foster, for when ropes, and cross-bow shafts, and pursuivant's warrants, and such-like gear were so rife, Tony could hardly 'scape them'

'Which Tony Foster mean you?' said the innkeeper

'Why, he they called Tony Fire-the-Fagot, because he brought a light to kindle the pile round Latimer and Ridley, when the wind blew out Jack Thong's torch, and no man else would give him light for love or money'

'Tony Foster lives and thrives,' said the host. 'But, kinsman, I would not have you call him Tony Fire-the-Fagot, if you would not brook the stab'

'How! is he grown ashamed on't?' said Lambourne, 'why, he was wont to boast of it, and say he liked as well to see a roasted heretic as a roasted ox.'

'Ay, but, kinsman, that was in Mary's time,' replied the landlord, 'when Tony's father was reeve here to the abbot of Abingdon. But since that, Tony married a pure precisian, and is as good a Protestant, I warrant you, as the best'

'And looks grave, and holds his head high, and scorns his old companions,' said the mercer

'Then he hath prospered, I warrant him,' said Lambourne, 'for ever when a man hath got nobles of his own he keeps out of the way of those whose exchequers lie in other men's purchase'

'Prospered, quotha!' said the mercer, 'why, you remember

Cumnor Place, the old mansion-house beside the church-yard ?'

'By the same token, I robbed the orchard three times — what of that ? It was the old abbot's residence when there was plague or sickness at Abingdon.'

'Ay,' said the host, 'but that has been long over, and Anthony Foster hath a right in it, and lives there by some grant from a great courtier, who had the church lands from the crown, and there he dwells, and has as little to do with any poor wight in Cumnor as if he were himself a belted knight.'

'Nay,' said the mercer, 'it is not altogether pride in Tony neither — there is a fair lady in the case, and Tony will scarce let the light of day look on her.'

'How !' said Tressilian, who now for the first time interfered in their conversation, 'did ye not say this Foster was married, and to a precisian ?'

'Married he was, and to as bitter a precisian as ever eat flesh in Lent, and a cat-and-dog life she led with Tony, as men said. But she is dead, rest be with her, and Tony hath but a slip of a daughter, so it is thought he means to wed this stranger, that men keep such a coil about.'

'And why so ? I mean, why do they keep a coil about her ?' said Tressilian.

'Why, I wot not,' answered the host, 'except that men say she is as beautiful as an angel, and no one knows whence she comes, and every one wishes to know why she is kept so closely mewed up. For my part, I never saw her, you have, I think, Master Goldthred ?'

'That I have, old boy,' said the mercer. 'Look you, I was riding hither from Abingdon — I passed under the east oriel window of the old mansion, where all the old saints and histories and such-like are painted. It was not the common path I took, but one through the park, for the postern door was upon the latch, and I thought I might take the privilege of an old comrade to ride across through the trees, both for shading, as the day was somewhat hot, and for avoiding of dust, because I had on my peach coloured doublet, pinked out with cloth of gold.'

'Which garment,' said Michael Lambourne, 'thou wouldst willingly make twinkle in the eyes of a fair dame. Ah ! villain, thou wilt never leave thy old tricks.'

'Not so — not so,' said the mercer, with a smirking laugh — 'not altogether so, but curiosity, thou knowest, and a strain of compassion withal, for the poor young lady sees nothing

from morn to even but Tony Foster, with his scowling black brows, his bull's head, and his bandy legs'

'And thou wouldst willingly show her a dapper body, in a silken jerkin, a limb like a short-legged hen's, in a cordovan boot, and a round, simpering, what-d'ye-lack sort of a countenance, set off with a velvet bonnet, a Turkey feather, and a gilded brooch? Ah! jolly mercer, they who have good wares are fond to show them! Come, gentles, let not the cup stand — here's to long spurs, short boots, full bonnets, and empty skulls!'

'Nay, now, you are jealous of me, Mike,' said Goldthred, 'and yet my luck was but what might have happened to thee, or any man.'

'Marry, confound thine impudence,' retorted Lambourne; 'thou wouldst not compare thy pudding face and sarsenet manners to a gentleman and a soldier?'

'Nay, my good sir,' said Tressilian, 'let me beseech you will not interrupt the gallant citizen, methinks he tells his tale so well, I could hearken to him till midnight.'

'It's more of your favour than of my desert,' answered Master Goldthred, 'but since I give you pleasure, worthy Master Tressilian, I shall proceed, maugre all the gibes and quips of this valiant soldier, who, peradventure, hath had more cuffs than crowns in the Low Countries. And so, sir, as I passed under the great painted window, leaving my rein loose on my ambling palfrey's neck, partly for mine ease, and partly that I might have the more leisure to peer about, I hears me the lattice open, and never credit me, sir, if there did not stand there the person of as fair a woman as ever crossed mine eyes, and I think I have looked on as many pretty wenches, and with as much judgment, as other folks'

'May I ask her appearance, sir?' said Tressilian

'Oh, sir,' replied Master Goldthred, 'I promise you, she was in gentlewoman's attire — a very quaint and pleasing dress, that might have served the Queen herself, for she had a forepart with body and sleeves, of ginger-coloured satin, which, in my judgment, must have cost by the yard some thirty shillings, lined with murrey taffeta, and laid down and guarded with two broad laces of gold and silver. And her hat, sir, was truly the best-fashioned thing that I have seen in these parts, being of tawny taffeta, embroidered with scorpions of Venice gold, and having a border garnished with gold fringe — I promise you, sir, an absolute and all-surpassing device. Touching her skirts, they were in the old pass-devant fashion.'

'I did not ask you of her attire, sir,' said Tressilhan, who had shown some impatience during their conversation, 'but of her complexion, the colour of her hair, her features'

'Touching her complexion,' answered the mercer, 'I am not so special certain, but I marked that her fan had an ivory handle, curiously inlaid, and then, again, as to the colour of her hair, why, I can warrant, be its hue what it might, that she wore above it a net of green silk, parcel twisted with gold.'

'A most mercer like memory,' said Lambourne 'the gentleman asks him of the lady's beauty, and he talks of her fine clothes!'

'I tell thee,' said the mercer, somewhat disconcerted, 'I had little time to look at her, for just as I was about to give her the good time of day, and for that purpose had puckered my features with a smile——'

'Like those of a jackanape simpering at a chestnut,' said Michael Lambourne

— 'Up started of a sudden,' continued Goldthred, without heeding the interruption, 'Tony Foster himself, with a cudgel in his hand——'

'And broke thy head across, I hope, for thine impertinence,' said his entertainer

'That were more easily said than done,' answered Goldthred, indignantly, 'no, no—there was no breaking of heads, it's true, he advanced his cudgel, and spoke of laying on, and asked why I did not keep the public road, and such-like, and I would have knocked him over the pate handsomely for his pains, only for the lady's presence, who might have swooned, for what I know'

'Now, out upon thee for a faint-spirited slave!' said Lambourne, 'what adventurous knight ever thought of the lady's terror when he went to thwack giant, dragon, or magician in her presence, and for her deliverance? But why talk to thee of dragons, who would be driven back by a dragon-fly? There thou hast missed the rarest opportunity!'

'Take it thyself then, bully Mike,' answered Goldthred 'Yonder is the enchanted manor, and the dragon, and the lady, all at thy service, if thou darest venture on them'

'Why, so I would for a quartern of sack,' said the soldier 'Or, stay—I am foully out of linen—wilt thou bet a piece of Hollands against these five angels that I go not up to the hall to-morrow and force Tony Foster to introduce me to his fair guest?'

'I accept your wager,' said the mercer 'and I think, though thou hadst even the impudence of the devil, I shall gain on thee this bout. Our landlord here shall hold stakes, and I will stake down gold till I send the huen'

'I will hold stakes on no such matter,' said Gosling 'Good now, my kinsman, drink your wine in quiet, and let such ventures alone I promise you, Master Foster hath interest enough to lay you up in lavender at the castle of Oxford, or to get your legs made acquainted with the town-stocks'

'That would be but renewing an old intimacy, for Mike's shins and the town's wooden pinfold have been well known to each other ere now,' said the mercer, 'but he shall not budge from his wager, unless he means to pay forfeit'

'Forfeit!' said Lambourne, 'I scorn it I value Tony Foster's wrath no more than a shelled pea-cod, and I will visit his Lindabrides, by St. George, be he willing or no!'

'I would gladly pay your halves of the risk, sir,' said Tressilian, 'to be permitted to accompany you on the adventure'

'In what would that advantage you, sir?' answered Lambourne

'In nothing, sir,' said Tressilian, 'unless to mark the skill and valour with which you conduct yourself. I am a traveller, who seeks for strange rencounters and uncommon passages, as the knights of yore did after adventures and feats of arms'

'Nay, if it pleasures you to see a trout tickled,' answered Lambourne, 'I care not how many witness my skill. And so here I drink success to my enterprise, and he that will not pledge me on his knees is a rascal, and I will cut his legs off by the garters!'

The draught which Michael Lambourne took upon this occasion had been preceded by so many others that reason tottered on her throne. He swore one or two incoherent oaths at the mercer, who refused, reasonably enough, to pledge him to a sentiment which inferred the loss of his own wager

'Wilt thou chop logic with me,' said Lambourne, 'thou knave, with no more brains than a skein of ravelled silk? by Heaven, I will cut thee into fifty yards of galloon lace!'

But, as he attempted to draw his sword for this doughty purpose, Michael Lambourne was seized upon by the tapster and the chamberlain, and conveyed to his own apartment, there to sleep himself sober at his leisure

The party then broke up, and the guests took their leave, much more to the contentment of mine host than of some of

the company, who were unwilling to quit good liquor, when it was to be had for free cost, so long as they were able to sit by it. They were, however, compelled to remove, and go at length they did, leaving Gosling and Tressilian in the empty apartment

'By my faith,' said the former, 'I wonder where our great folks find pleasure, when they spend their means in entertainments, and in playing mine host without sending in a reckoning. It is what I but rarely practise, and whenever I do, by St Julian, it grieves me beyond measure. Each of these empty stoups now, which my nephew and his drunken comrades have swilled off, should have been a matter of profit to one in my line, and I must set them down a dead loss. I cannot, for my heart, conceive the pleasure of noise, and nonsense, and drunken freaks, and drunken quarrels, and smut, and blasphemy, and so forth, when a man loses money instead of gaining by it. And yet many a fair estate is lost in upholding such a useless course, and that greatly contributes to the decay of publicans, for who the devil do you think would pay for drink at the Black Bear, when he can have it for nothing at my lord's or the squire's?'

Tressilian perceived that the wine had made some impression even on the seasoned brain of mine host, which was chiefly to be inferred from his declaiming against drunkenness. As he himself had carefully avoided the bowl, he would have availed himself of the frankness of the moment to extract from Gosling some further information upon the subject of Anthony Foster, and the lady whom the mercer had seen in the mansion-house, but his inquiries only set the host upon a new theme of declamation against the wiles of the fair sex, in which he brought, at full length, the whole wisdom of Solomon to reinforce his own. Finally, he turned his admonitions, mixed with much objurcation, upon his tapsters and drawers, who were employed in removing the relics of the entertainment and restoring order to the apartment, and at length, joining example to precept, though with no good success, he demolished a salver with half a score of glasses, in attempting to show how such service was done at the Three Cranes in the Vintry, then the most topping tavern in London. This last accident so far recalled him to his better self that he retired to his bed, slept sound, and awoke a new man in the morning.

CHAPTER III

Nay, I'll hold touch, the game shall be play'd out,
It ne'er shall stop for me, this merry wager
That which I say when gamesome, I'll avouch
In my most sober mood, ne'er trust me else

The Hazard Table.

‘**A**ND how doth your kinsman, good mine host?’ said Tressilian, when Giles Goshing first appeared in the public room, on the morning following the revel which we described in the last chapter. ‘Is he well, and will he abide by his wager?’

‘For well, sir, he started two hours since, and has visited I know not what purlieus of his old companions, hath but now returned, and is at this instant breakfasting on new-laid eggs and muscadine, and for his wager, I caution you as a friend to have little to do with that, or indeed aught that Mike proposes. Wherefore, I counsel you to a warm breakfast upon a culiss, which shall restore the tone of the stomach, and let my nephew and Master Goldthred swagger about their wager as they list’

‘It seems to me, mine host,’ said Tressilian, ‘that you know not well what to say about this kinsman of yours, and that you can neither blame nor commend him without some twinge of conscience’

‘You have spoken truly, Master Tressilian,’ replied Giles Goshing. ‘There is natural affection whimpering into one ear, “Giles — Giles, why wilt thou take away the good name of thy own nephew? Wilt thou defame thy sister’s son, Giles Goshing? — wilt thou defoul thine own nest, dishonour thine own blood?” And then, again, comes justice, and says, “Here is a worthy guest as ever came to the bonny Black Bear, one who never challenged a reckoning — as I say to your face you never did, Master Tressilian — not that you have had cause — one who knows not why he came, so far as I can see, or when he is going away, and wilt thou, being a publican, having paid scot and

lot these thirty years in the town of Cumnor, and being at this instant head-borough — wilt thou suffer this guest of guests, this man of men, this six-hooped pot, as I may say, of a traveller, to fall into the meshes of thy nephew, who is known for a swasher and a desperate Dick, a carder and a dicer, a professor of the seven damnable sciences, if ever man took degrees in them ?” No, by Heaven ! I might wink, and let him catch such a small butterfly as Goldthred, but thou, my guest, shalt be forewarned, forearmed, so thou wilt but listen to thy trusty host.’

‘Why, mine host, thy counsel shall not be cast away,’ replied Tressilian, ‘however, I must uphold my share in this wager, having once passed my word to that effect. But lend me, I pray, some of thy counsel. This Foster, who or what is he, and why makes he such mystery of his female inmate ?’

‘Troth,’ replied Gosling, ‘I can add but little to what you heard last night. He was one of Queen Mary’s Papists, and now he is one of Queen Elizabeth’s Protestants, he was an on-langer of the abbot of Abingdon, and now he lives as master of the manor house. Above all, he was poor and is rich. Folk talk of private apartments in his old waste mansion house bedizened fine enough to serve the Queen, God bless her ! Some men think he found a treasure in the orchard, some that he sold himself to the devil for treasure, and some say that he cheated the abbot out of the church plate which was hidden in the old manor house at the Reformation. Rich, however, he is, and God and his conscience, with the devil perhaps, besides, only know how he came by it. He has sulky ways too, breaking off intercourse with all that are of the place, as if he had either some strange secret to keep or held himself to be made of another clay than we are. I think it likely my kinsman and he will quarrel, if Mike thrust his acquaintance on him, and I am sorry that you, my worthy Master Tressilian, will still think of going in my nephew’s company.’

Tressilian again answered him, that he would proceed with great caution, and that he should have no fears on his account, in short, he bestowed on him all the customary assurances with which those who are determined on a rash action are wont to parry the advice of their friends.

Meantime, the traveller accepted the landlord’s invitation, and had just finished the excellent breakfast which was served to him and Gosling by pretty Cicely, the beauty of the bar, when the hero of the preceding night, Michael Lambourne,

entered the apartment His toilette had apparently cost him some labour, for his clothes, which differed from those he wore on his journey, were of the newest fashion, and put on with great attention to the display of his person

'By my faith, uncle,' said the gallant, 'you made a wet night of it, and I feel it followed by a dry morning I will pledge you willingly in a cup of bastard How, my pretty coz, Cicely! why, I left you but a child in the cradle, and there thou stand'st in thy velvet waistcoat, as tight a girl as England's sun shines on. Know thy friends and kindred, Cicely, and come hither, child, that I may kiss thee, and give thee my blessing'

'Concern not yourself about Cicely, kinsman,' said Giles Gosling, 'but e'en let her go her way, o' God's name, for although your mother were her father's sister, yet that shall not make you and her cater-cousins'

'Why, uncle,' replied Lambourne, 'think'st thou I am an infidel, and would harm those of mine own house?'

'It is for no harm that I speak, Mike,' answered his uncle, 'but a simple humour of precaution which I have True, thou art as well gilded as a snake when he casts his old slough in the spring-time, but for all that, thou creepest not into my Eden I will look after mine Eve, Mike, and so content thee But how brave thou be'st, lad! To look on thee now, and compare thee with Master Tressilian here, in his sad-coloured riding-suit, who would not say that thou wert the real gentleman and he the tapster's boy?'

'Troth, uncle,' replied Lambourne, 'no one would say so but one of your country-breeding, that knows no better I will say, and I care not who hears me, there is something about the real gentry that few men come up to that are not born and bred to the mystery I wot not where the trick lies, but although I can enter an ordinary with as much audacity, rebuke the waiters and drawers as loudly, drink as deep a health, swear as round an oath, and fling my gold as freely about as any of the jingling spurs and white feathers that are around me, yet, hang me if I can ever catch the true grace of it, though I have practised an hundred times The man of the house sets me lowest at the board, and carves to me the last, and the drawer says, "Coming, friend," without any more reverence or respectful addition But, hang it, let it pass, care killed a cat I have gentry enough to pass the trick on Tony Fire-the-Fagot, and that will do for the matter in hand'

'You hold your purpose, then, of visiting your old acquaintance?' said Tressilian to the adventurer

'Ay, sir,' replied Lambourne 'when stakes are made, the game must be played, that is gamester's law all over the world. You, sir, unless my memory fails me, for I did steep it somewhat too deeply in the sack-butt, took some share in my hazard?'

'I propose to accompany you in your adventure,' said Tressilian, 'if you will do me so much grace as to permit me, and I have staked my share of the forfeit in the hands of our worthy host.'

'That he hath,' answered Giles Gosling, 'in as fair Harry nobles as ever were melted into sack by a good fellow. So, luck to your enterprise, since you will needs venture on Tony Foster, but, by my credit, you had better take another draught before you depart, for your welcome at the hall yonder will be somewhat of the driest. And if you do get into peril, beware of taking to cold steel, but send for me, Giles Gosling, the head-borough, and I may be able to make something out of Tony yet, for as proud as he is'

The nephew dutifully obeyed his uncle's hint, by taking a second powerful pull at the tankard, observing, that his wit never served him so well as when he had washed his temples with a deep morning's draught, and they set forth together for the habitation of Anthony Foster

The village of Cumnor is pleasantly built on a hill, and in a wooded park closely adjacent was situated the ancient mansion occupied at this time by Anthony Foster, of which the ruins may be still extant. The park was then full of large trees, and in particular of ancient and mighty oaks, which stretched their giant arms over the high wall surrounding the demesne, thus giving it a melancholy, secluded, and monastic appearance. The entrance to the park lay through an old-fashioned gateway in the outer wall, the door of which was formed of two huge oaken leaves, thickly studded with nails, like the gate of an old town

'We shall be finely helped up here,' said Michael Lambourne, looking at the gateway and gate, 'if this fellow's suspicious humour should refuse us admission altogether, as it is like he may, in case this linsey wolsey fellow of a mercer's visit to his premises has disquieted him. But, no,' he added, pushing the huge gate, which gave way, 'the door stands invitingly open, and here we are within the forbidden ground,

without other impediment than the passive resistance of a heavy oak door, moving on rusty hinges'

They stood now in an avenue overshadowed by such old trees as we have described, and which had been bordered at one time by high hedges of yew and holly. But these, having been untrimmed for many years, had run up into great bushes, or rather dwarf-trees, and now encroached, with their dark and melancholy boughs, upon the road which they once had screened. The avenue itself was grown up with grass, and in one or two places interrupted by piles of withered brushwood, which had been lopped from the trees cut down in the neighbouring park, and was here stacked for drying. Formal walks and avenues, which, at different points, crossed this principal approach, were in like manner choked up and interrupted by piles of brushwood and billets, and in other places by underwood and brambles. Besides the general effect of desolation which is so strongly impressed, whenever we behold the contrivances of man wasted and obliterated by neglect, and witness the marks of social life effaced gradually by the influence of vegetation, the size of the trees and the outspreading extent of their boughs diffused a gloom over the scene, even when the sun was at the highest, and made a proportional impression on the mind of those who visited it. This was felt even by Michael Lambourne, however alien his habits were to receiving any impressions, excepting from things which addressed themselves immediately to his passions.

'This wood is as dark as a wolf's mouth,' said he to Tressilian, as they walked together slowly along the solitary and broken approach, and had just come in sight of the monastic front of the old mansion, with its shafted windows, brick walls overgrown with ivy and creeping shrubs, and twisted stalks of chimneys of heavy stonework. 'And yet,' continued Lambourne, 'it is fairly done on the part of Foster too, for, since he chooses not visitors, it is right to keep his place in a fashion that will invite few to trespass upon his privacy. But had he been the Anthony I once knew him, these sturdy oaks had long since become the property of some honest woodmonger, and the manor-close here had looked lighter at midnight than it now does at noon, while Foster played fast and loose with the price in some cunning corner in the purloins of Whitefriars.'

'Was he then such an unthrift?' asked Tressilian.

'He was,' answered Lambourne, 'like the rest of us, no saint, and no saver. But what I liked worst of Tony was,

that he loved to take his pleasure by himself, and grudged, as men say, every drop of water that went past his own mill. I have known him deal with such measures of wine when he was alone as I would not have ventured on with aid of the best toper in Berkshire, that, and some sway towards superstition, which he had by temperament, rendered him unworthy the company of a good fellow. And now he has earthed himself here in a den just befitting such a sly fox as himself.

'May I ask you, Master Lambourne,' said Tressilian, 'since your old companion's humour jumps so little with your own, wherefore you are so desirous to renew acquaintance with him?'

'And may I ask you, in return, Master Tressilian,' answered Lambourne, 'wherefore you have shown yourself so desirous to accompany me on this party?'

'I told you my motive,' said Tressilian, 'when I took share in your wager. It was simple curiosity.'

'La you there now!' answered Lambourne. 'See how you civil and discreet gentlemen think to use us who live by the free exercise of our wits! Had I answered your question by saying that it was simple curiosity which led me to visit my old comrade, Anthony Foster, I warrant you had set it down for an evasion and a turn of my trade. But any answer, I suppose, must serve my turn.'

'And wherefore should not bare curiosity,' said Tressilian, 'be a sufficient reason for my taking this walk with you?'

'Oh, content yourself, sir,' replied Lambourne, 'you cannot put the change on me so easy as you think, for I have lived among the quick-stirring spirits of the age too long to swallow chaff for grain. You are a gentleman of birth and breeding — your bearing makes it good, of civil habits and fair reputation — your manners declare it, and my uncle avouches it, and yet you associate yourself with a sort of scant-of grace, as men call me, and, knowing me to be such, you make yourself my companion in a visit to a man whom you are a stranger to — and all out of mere curiosity, forsooth! The excuse, if curiously balanced, would be found to want some scruples of just weight or so.'

'If your suspicions were just,' said Tressilian, 'you have shown no confidence in me to invite or deserve mine.'

'Oh, if that be all,' said Lambourne, 'my motives lie above water. While this gold of mine lasts,' taking out his purse, chucking it into the air, and catching it as it fell, 'I will

make it buy pleasure, and when it is out, I must have more. Now, if this mysterious Lady of the Manor — this fair Landa-brides of Tony Fne-the-Fagot — be so admirable a piece as men say, why, there's chance that she may aid me to melt my nobles into groats, and, again, if Anthony be so wealthy a chuff as report speaks him, he may prove the philosopher's stone to me, and convert my groats into fair rose nobles again'

'A comfortable proposal, truly,' said Tressilian, 'but I see not what chance there is of accomplishing it'

'Not to-day, or perchance to-morrow,' answered Lambourne: 'I expect not to catch the old jack till I have disposed my ground-baits handsomely. But I know something more of his affairs this morning than I did last night, and I will so use my knowledge that he shall think it more perfect than it is. Nay, without expecting either pleasure or profit, or both, I had not stepped a stride within this manor, I can tell you, for I promise you I hold our visit not altogether without risk. But here we are, and we must make the best on't'

While he thus spoke, they had entered a large orchard which surrounded the house on two sides, though the trees, abandoned by the care of man, were overgrown and mossy, and seemed to bear little fruit. Those which had been formerly trained as espaliers had now resumed their natural mode of growing, and exhibited grotesque forms, partaking of the original training which they had received. The greater part of the ground, which had once been parterres and flower-gardens, was suffered in like manner to run to waste, excepting a few patches which had been dug up, and planted with ordinary pot herbs. Some statues, which had ornamented the garden in its days of splendour, were now thrown down from their pedestals and broken in pieces, and a large summer-house, having a heavy stone front, decorated with carving, representing the life and actions of Samson, was in the same dilapidated condition.

They had just traversed this garden of the sluggard, and were within a few steps of the door of the mansion, when Lambourne had ceased speaking — a circumstance very agreeable to Tressilian, as it saved him the embarrassment of either commenting upon or replying to the frank avowal which his companion had just made of the sentiments and views which induced him to come hither. Lambourne knocked roundly and boldly at the huge door of the mansion, observing, at the same time, he had seen a less strong one upon a county jail. It was not until they had knocked more than once that an aged, sour-visaged

domestic reconnoitred them through a small square hole in the door, well secured with bars of iron, and demanded what they wanted.

'To speak with Master Foster instantly, on pressing business of the state,' was the ready reply of Michael Lambourne

'Methinks you will find difficulty to make that good,' said Tressilian in a whisper to his companion, while the servant went to carry the message to his master

'Tush,' replied the adventurer, 'no soldier would go on were he always to consider when and how he should come off. Let us once obtain entrance, and all will go well enough.'

In a short time the servant returned, and drawing with a careful hand both bolt and bar, opened the gate, which admitted them through an archway into a square court, surrounded by buildings. Opposite to the arch was another door, which the serving-man in like manner unlocked, and thus introduced them into a stone paved parlour, where there was but little furniture, and that of the rudest and most ancient fashion. The windows were tall and ample, reaching almost to the roof of the room, which was composed of black oak, those opening to the quadrangle were obscured by the height of the surrounding buildings, and, as they were traversed with massive shafts of solid stonework, and thickly painted with religious devices and scenes taken from Scripture history, by no means admitted light in proportion to their size, and what did penetrate through them partook of the dark and gloomy tinge of the stained glass

Tressilian and his guide had time enough to observe all these particulars, for they waited some space in the apartment ere the present master of the mansion at length made his appearance. Prepared as he was to see an inauspicious and ill looking person, the ugliness of Anthony Foster considerably exceeded what Tressilian had anticipated. He was of middle stature, built strongly, but so clumsily as to border on deformity, and to give all his motions the ungainly awkwardness of a left-legged and left-handed man. His hair, in arranging which men at that time, as at present, were very nice and curious, instead of being carefully cleaned and disposed into short curls, or else set up on end, as is represented in old paintings, in a manner resembling that used by fine gentlemen of our own day, escaped in sable negligence from under a furred bonnet, and hung in elf-locks, which seemed strangers to the comb, over his rugged brows, and around his very singular and unprepossessing countenance. His

keen dark eyes were deep set beneath broad and shaggy eyebrows, and as they were usually bent on the ground, seemed as if they were themselves ashamed of the expression natural to them, and were desirous to conceal it from the observation of men. At times, however, when, more intent on observing others, he suddenly raised them, and fixed them keenly on those with whom he conversed, they seemed to express both the fiercer passions and the power of mind which could at will suppress or disguise the intensity of inward feeling. The features which corresponded with these eyes and this form were irregular, and marked so as to be indelibly fixed on the mind of him who had once seen them. Upon the whole, as Tressilian could not help acknowledging to himself, the Anthony Foster who now stood before them was the last person, judging from personal appearance, upon whom one would have chosen to intrude an unexpected and undesired visit. His attire was a doublet of russet leather, like those worn by the better sort of country folk, girt with a buff belt, in which was stuck on the right side a long knife, or dudgeon dagger, and on the other a cutlass. He raised his eyes as he entered the room, and fixed a keenly penetrating glance upon his two visitors, then cast them down as if counting his steps, while he advanced slowly into the middle of the room, and said, in a low and smothered tone of voice, 'Let me pray you, gentlemen, to tell me the cause of this visit.'

He looked as if he expected the answer from Tressilian, so true was Lambourne's observation, that the superior air of breeding and dignity shone through the disguise of an inferior dress. But it was Michael who replied to him, with the easy familiarity of an old friend, and a tone which seemed unembarrassed by any doubt of the most cordial reception.

'Ha! my dear friend and ingie, Tony Foster!' he exclaimed, seizing upon the unwilling hand, and shaking it with such emphasis as almost to stagger the sturdy frame of the person whom he addressed, 'how fares it with you for many a long year? What! have you altogether forgotten your friend, gossip, and playfellow, Michael Lambourne?'

'Michael Lambourne!' said Foster, looking at him a moment, then dropping his eyes, and with little ceremony extricating his hand from the friendly grasp of the person by whom he was addressed — 'are you Michael Lambourne?'

'Ay, sure as you are Anthony Foster,' replied Lambourne

'Tis well,' answered his sullen host, 'and what may Michael Lambourne expect from his visit hither?'

'*Voto a Dios*,' answered Lambourne, 'I expected a better welcome than I am like to meet, I think.'

'Why, thou gallows-bird — thou jail-rat — thou friend of the hangman and his customers,' replied Foster, 'hast thou the assurance to expect countenance from any one whose neck is beyond the compass of a 'Tyburn tippet?'

'It may be with me as you say,' replied Lambourne, 'and suppose I grant it to be so for argument's sake, I were still good enough society for mine ancient friend Anthony Fire the Fagot, though he be, for the present, by some indescribable title, the master of Cumnor Place.'

'Hark you, Michael Lambourne,' said Foster, 'you are a gambler now, and live by the counting of chances. Compute me the odds that I do not, on this instant, throw you out of that window into the ditch there.'

'Twenty to one that you do not,' answered the sturdy visitor.

'And wherefore, I pray you?' demanded Anthony Foster, setting his teeth and compressing his lips, like one who endeavours to suppress some violent internal emotion.

'Because,' said Lambourne, coolly, 'you dare not for your life lay a finger on me. I am younger and stronger than you, and have in me a double portion of the fighting devil, though not, it may be, quite so much of the undermining fiend, that finds an underground way to his purpose, who hides halters under folks' pillows, and who puts ratsbane into their porridge, as the stage-play says.'

Foster looked at him earnestly, then turned away, and paced the room twice, with the same steady and considerate pace with which he had entered it, then suddenly came back, and extended his hand to Michael Lambourne, saying, 'Be not wroth with me, good Mike, I did but try whether thou hadst parted with aught of thine old and honourable frankness, which your enviers and backbiters called saucy impudence.'

'Let them call it what they will,' said Michael Lambourne, 'it is the commodity we must carry through the world with us. Uds daggers! I tell thee, man, mine own stock of assurance was too small to trade upon. I was fain to take in a ton or two more of brass at every port where I touched in the voyage of life, and I started overboard what modesty and scruples I had remaining, in order to make room for the stowage.'

'Nay, nay,' replied Foster, 'touching scruples and modesty, you sailed hence in ballast. But who is this gallant, honest Mike? Is he a Corinthian — a cutter like thyself?'

'I prithee, know Master Tressilian, bully Foster,' replied Lambourne, presenting his friend in answer to his friend's question — 'know him and honour him, for he is a gentleman of many admirable qualities, and though he traffies not in my line of business, at least so far as I know, he has, nevertheless, a just respect and admiration for artists of our class. He will come to in time, as seldom fails, but as yet he is only a neophyte, only a proselyte, and frequents the company of cocks of the game, as a puny fencer does the schools of the masters, to see how a foil is handled by the teachers of defence.'

'If such be his quality, I will pray your company in another chamber, honest Mike, for what I have to say to thee is for thy private ear. Meanwhile, I pray you, sir, to abide us in this apartment, and without leaving it, there be those in this house who would be alarmed by the sight of a stranger.'¹

Tressilian acquiesced, and the two worthies left the apartment together, in which he remained alone to await their return

¹ See Foster, Lambourne, and the Black Bear. Note 2

CHAPTER IV

Not serve two masters ? Here's a youth will try it —
Would fain serve God, yet give the devil his due ,
Says grace before he doth a deed of villainy,
And returns his thanks devoutly when 't is acted

Old Play

THE room into which the master of Cumnor Place conducted his worthy visitant was of greater extent than that in which they had at first conversed, and had yet more the appearance of dilapidation. Large oaken presses, filled with shelves of the same wood, surrounded the room, and had, at one time, served for the arrangement of a numerous collection of books, many of which yet remained, but torn and defaced, covered with dust, deprived of their costly clasps and bindings, and tossed together in heaps upon the shelves, as things altogether disregarded, and abandoned to the pleasure of every spoiler. The very presses themselves seemed to have incurred the hostility of those enemies of learning, who had destroyed the volumes with which they had been heretofore filled. They were, in several places, dismantled of their shelves, and otherwise broken and damaged, and were, moreover, mantled with cobwebs and covered with dust.

'The men who wrote these books,' said Lambourne, looking round him, 'little thought whose keeping they were to fall into'

'Nor what yeoman's service they were to do me,' quoth Anthony Foster 'the cook hath used them for scouring his pewter, and the groom hath had nought else to clean my boots with this many a month past.'

'And yet,' said Lambourne, 'I have been in cities where such learned commodities would have been deemed too good for such offices.'

'Pshaw — pshaw,' answered Foster, 'they are Popish trash, every one of them — private studies of the mumping old abbot

of Abingdon The nineteenthly of a pure Gospel -ermon were worth a cart-load of such rakings of the kennel of Rome'

'Gad-a-mercy, Master Tony Fire-the-Fagot'' said Lambourne, by way of reply

Foster scowled darkly at him, as he replied, 'Hark ye, friend Mike, forget that name, and the passage which it relates to, if you would not have our newly-revived comradeship die a sudden and a violent death'

'Why,' said Michael Lambourne 'you were wont to glory in the share you had in the death of the two old heretical bishops'

'That,' said his comrade, 'was while I was in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and applies not to my walk or my ways now that I am called forth into the lists Mr Melchisedek Maultext compared my misfortune in that matter to that of the Apostle Paul, who kept the clothes of the witnesses who stoned St Stephen. He held forth on the matter three Sabbaths past, and illustrated the same by the conduct of an honourable person present, meaning me'

'I prithee peace, Foster,' said Lambourne, 'for, I know not how it is, I have a sort of creeping comes over my skin when I hear the devil quote Scripture, and besides, man, how couldst thou have the heart to quit that convenient old religion, which you could so slip off or on as easily as your glove? Do I not remember how you were wont to carry your conscience to confession, as duly as the month came round? and when thou hadst it scoured, and burnished, and whitewashed by the priest, thou wert ever ready for the worst villany which could be devised, like a child who is always readiest to rush into the mire when he has got his Sunday's clean jerkin on'

'Trouble not thyself about my conscience,' said Foster, 'it is a thing thou canst not understand, having never had one of thine own. But let us rather to the point, and say to me, in one word, what is thy business with me, and what hopes have drawn thee hither?'

'The hope of bettering myself, to be sure,' answered Lambourne, 'as the old woman said, when she leapt over the bridge at Kingston. Look you, this purse has all that is left of as round a sum as a man would wish to carry in his slop-pouch. You are here well established, it would seem, and, as I think, well befriended, for men talk of your being under some special protection, nay, stare not like a pig that is stuck, mon, thou canst not dance in a net and they not see thee Now I know

such protection is not purchased for nought you must have services to render for it, and in these I propose to help thee'

'But how if I lack no assistance from thee, Mike? I think thy modesty might suppose that were a case possible'

'That is to say,' retorted Lambourne, 'that you would engross the whole work rather than divide the reward, but be not over-greedy, Anthony Covetousness bursts the sack and spills the grain Look you, when the huntsman goes to kill a stag, he takes with him more dogs than one. He has the stanch lyme-hound to track the wounded buck over hill and dale, but he hath also the fleet gaze hound to kill him at view Thou art the lyme-hound, I am the gaze-hound, and thy patron will need the aid of both, and can well afford to requite it. Thou hast deep sagacity, an unrelenting purpose, a steady, long-breathed malignity of nature, that surpasses mine But then I am the bolder, the more ready, both at action and expedient. Separate, our properties are not so perfect, but unite them, and we drive the world before us How sayest thou, shall we hunt in couples?'

'It is a currish proposal, thus to thrust thyself upon my private matters,' replied Foster, 'but thou wert ever an ill-nurtured whelp'

'You shall have no cause to say so, unless you spurn my courtesy,' said Michael Lambourne, 'but if so, keep thee well from me, sir knight, as the romance has it. I will either share your counsels or traverse them, for I have come here to be busy, either with thee or against thee'

'Well,' said Anthony Foster, 'since thou dost leave me so fair a choice, I will rather be thy friend than thine enemy Thou art right I *can* prefer thee to the service of a patron who has enough of means to make us both and an hundred more And, to say truth, thou art well qualified for his service Boldness and dexterity he demands — the justice books bear witness in thy favour, no starting at scruples in his service — why, who ever suspected thee of a conscience? an assurance he must have who would follow a courtier — and thy brow is as impenetrable as a Milan visor There is but one thing I would fain see amended in thee.'

'And what is that, my most precious friend Anthony?' replied Lambourne, 'for I swear by the pillow of the Seven Sleepers, I will not be slothful in amending it.'

'Why, you gave a sample of it even now,' said Foster 'Your speech twangs too much of the old stamp, and you garnish it

ever and anon with singular oaths, that savour of Papistrie. Besides, your exterior man is altogether too debased and irregular to become one of his lordship's followers, since he has a reputation to keep up in the eye of the world. You must somewhat reform your dress, upon a more grave and composed fashion, wear your cloak on both shoulders, and your falling band unrumpled and well starched. You must enlarge the brim of your beaver, and diminish the superfluity of your trunk-hose; go to church, or, which will be better, to meeting, at least once a month, protest only upon your faith and conscience, lay aside your swashing look, and never touch the hilt of your sword but when you would draw the carnal weapon in good earnest.'

'By this light, Anthony, thou art mad,' answered Lambourne, 'and hast described rather the gentleman-usher to a Puritan's wife than the follower of an ambitious courtier! Yes, such a thing as thou wouldst make of me should wear a book at his girdle instead of a poniard, and might just be suspected of manhood enough to squire a proud dame-citizen to the lecture at St Antonin's, and quarrel in her cause with any flat-capp'd threadmaker that would take the wall of her. He must ruffle it in another sort that would walk to court in a nobleman's train.'

'Oh, content you, sir,' replied Foster, 'there is a change since you knew the English world, and there are those who can hold their way through the boldest courses, and the most secret, and yet never a swaggering word, or an oath, or a profane word in their conversation.'

'That is to say,' replied Lambourne, 'they are in a trading copartnery to do the devil's business without mentioning his name in the firm? Well, I will do my best to counterfeit, rather than lose ground in this new world, since thou sayest it is grown so precise. But, Anthony, what is the name of this nobleman, in whose service I am to turn hypocrite?'

'Aha! Master Michael, are you there with your bears?' said Foster, with a grim smile, 'and is this the knowledge you pretend of my concernments? How know you now there is such a person *in rerum natura*, and that I have not been putting a jape upon you all this time?'

'Thou put a jape on me, thou sodden-brained gull?' answered Lambourne, nothing daunted, 'why, dark and muddy as thou think'st thyself, I would engage in a day's space to see as clear through thee and thy concernments, as thou call'st them, as through the filthy horn of an old stable lantern.'

At this moment their conversation was interrupted by a scream from the next apartment.

'By the holy cross of Abingdon,' exclaimed Anthony Foster, forgetting his Protestantism in his alarm, 'I am a ruined man!'

So saying, he rushed into the apartment whence the scream issued, followed by Michael Lambourne. But to account for the sounds which interrupted their conversation it is necessary to recede a little way in our narrative.

It has been already observed that, when Lambourne accompanied Foster into the library, they left Tressilian alone in the ancient parlour. His dark eye followed them forth of the apartment with a glance of contempt, a part of which his mind instantly transferred to himself, for having stooped to be even for a moment their familiar companion. 'These are the associates, Amy' — it was thus he communed with himself — 'to which thy cruel levity, thine unthinking and most unmerited falsehood, has condemned him of whom his friends once hoped far other things, and who now scorns himself, as he will be scorned by others, for the baseness he stoops to for the love of thee! But I will not leave the pursuit of thee, once the object of my purest and most devoted affection, though to me thou canst henceforth be nothing but a thing to weep over. I will save thee from thy betrayer and from thyself. I will restore thee to thy parents — to thy God. I cannot bid the bright star again sparkle in the sphere it has shot from, but——'

A slight noise in the apartment interrupted his reverie, he looked round, and in the beautiful and richly-attired female who entered at that instant by a side door he recognised the object of his search. The first impulse arising from this discovery urged him to conceal his face with the collar of his cloak, until he should find a favourable moment of making himself known. But his purpose was disconcerted by the young lady (she was not above eighteen years old), who ran joyfully towards him, and, pulling him by the cloak, said playfully, 'Nay, my sweet friend, after I have waited for you so long, you come not to my bower to play the masquer. You are arraigned of treason to true love and fond affection, and you must stand up at the bar and answer it with face uncovered — how say you, guilty or not?'

'Alas, Amy!' said Tressilian, in a low and melancholy tone, as he suffered her to draw the mantle from his face. The sound of his voice, and still more the unexpected sight of his face, changed in an instant the lady's playful mood. She staggered

back, turned as pale as death, and put her hands before her face. Tressilian was himself for a moment much overcome, but seeming suddenly to remember the necessity of using an opportunity which might not again occur, he said in a low tone, 'Amy, fear me not.'

'Why should I fear you?' said the lady, withdrawing her hands from her beautiful face, which was now covered with crimson — 'why should I fear you, Mr Tressilian? or wherefore have you intruded yourself into my dwelling, uninvited, sir, and unwished for?'

'Your dwelling, Amy!' said Tressilian. 'Alas! is a prison your dwelling? — a prison guarded by one of the most sordid of men, but not a greater wretch than his employer!'

'This house is mine,' said Amy — 'mine while I choose to inhabit it. If it is my pleasure to live in seclusion, who shall gainsay me?'

'Your father, maiden,' answered Tressilian — 'your broken-hearted father, who despatched me in quest of you with that authority which he cannot exert in person. Here is his letter, written while he blessed his pain of body which somewhat stunned the agony of his mind.'

'The pain! is my father then ill?' said the lady.

'So ill,' answered Tressilian, 'that even your utmost haste may not restore him to health, but all shall be instantly prepared for your departure the instant you yourself will give consent.'

'Tressilian,' answered the lady, 'I cannot — I must not — I dare not leave this place. Go back to my father, tell him I will obtain leave to see him within twelve hours from hence. Go back, Tressilian, tell him I am well, I am happy — happy could I think he was so, tell him not to fear that I will come, and in such a manner that all the grief Amy has given him shall be forgotten — the poor Amy is now greater than she dare name. Go, good Tressilian, I have injured thee too, but believe me I have power to heal the wounds I have caused. I robbed you of a childish heart, which was not worthy of you, and I can repay the loss with honours and advancement.'

'Do you say this to me, Amy? Do you offer me pageants of idle ambition for the quiet peace you have robbed me of? But be it so — I came not to upbraid, but to serve and to free you. You cannot disguise it from me — you are a prisoner. Otherwise your kind heart — for it was once a kind heart — would have been already at your father's bed-side. Come, poor, de-

ceived, unhappy maiden All shall be forgot — all shall be forgiven Fear not my importunity for what regarded our contract, it was a dream, and I have awaked. But come, your father yet lives Come, and one word of affection — one tear of penitence, will efface the memory of all that has passed'

'Have I not already said, 'Tressilian,' replied she, 'that I will surely come to my father, and that without farther delay than is necessary to discharge other and equally binding duties? Go, carry him the news I come as sure as there is light in heaven — that is, when I obtain permission'

'Permission! — permission to visit your father on his sick-bed, perhaps on his death-bed!' repeated Tressilian, impatiently, 'and permission from whom? From the villain who, under disguise of friendship, abused every duty of hospitality, and stole thee from thy father's roof!'

'Do him no slander, 'Tressilian! He whom thou speakest of wears a sword as sharp as thine — sharper, vain man, for the best deeds thou hast ever done in peace or war were as unworthy to be named with his as thy obscure rank to match itself with the sphere he moves in Leave me! Go, do mine errand to my father, and when he next sends to me, let him choose a more welcome messenger'

'Amy,' replied Tressilian, calmly, 'thou canst not move me by thy reproaches Tell me one thing, that I may bear at least one ray of comfort to my aged friend. This rank of his which thou dost boast — dost thou share it with him, Amy? Does he claim a husband's right to control thy motions?'

'Stop thy base, unmannered tongue!' said the lady, 'to no question that derogates from my honour do I deign an answer'

'You have said enough in refusing to reply,' answered Tressilian, 'and mark me, unhappy as thou art, I am armed with thy father's full authority to command thy obedience, and I will save thee from the slavery of sin and of sorrow, even despite of thyself, Amy'

'Menace no violence here!' exclaimed the lady, drawing back from him, and alarmed at the determination expressed in his look and manner 'threaten me not, Tressilian, for I have means to compel force.'

'But not, I trust, the wish to use them in so evil a cause?' said Tressilian. 'With thy will — thine uninfluenced, free, and natural will, Amy, thou canst not choose this state of slavery and dishonour thou hast been bound by some spell — entrapped by some deceit — art now detained by some compelled

vow. But thus I break the charm Amy, in the name of thine excellent, thy broken-hearted father, I command thee to follow me !'

As he spoke, he advanced and extended his arm, as with the purpose of laying hold upon her. But she shrunk back from his grasp, and uttered the scream which, as we before noticed, brought into the apartment Lambourne and Foster.

The latter exclaimed, as soon as he entered, 'Fire and fagot ! what have we here ?' Then addressing the lady, in a tone betwixt entreaty and command, he added, 'Uds precious ! madam, what make you here out of bounds ? Retire — retire, there is life and death in this matter. And you, friend, whoever you may be, leave this house out with you, before my dagger's hilt and your costard become acquainted. Draw, Mike, and rid us of the knave !'

'Not I, on my soul,' replied Lambourne, 'he came hither in my company, and he is safe from me by cutter's law, at least till we meet again. But hark ye, my Cornish comrade, you have brought a Cornish flaw of wind with you hither — a hurricane as they call it in the Indies. Make yourself scarce — depart — vanish, or we'll have you summoned before the Mayor of Halgaver, and that before Dudman and Ramhead meet' ¹

'Away, base groom !' said Tressilian. 'And you, madam, fare you well, what life lingers in your father's bosom will leave him at the news I have to tell.'

He departed, the lady saying faintly as he left the room, 'Tressilian, be not rash — say no scandal of me.'

'Here is proper gear,' said Foster. 'I pray you go to your chamber, my lady, and let us consider how this is to be answered, nay, tarry not.'

'I move not at your command, sir,' answered the lady.

'Nay, but you must, fair lady,' replied Foster, 'excuse my freedom, but, by blood and nails, this is no time to strain courtesies — you *must* go to your chamber. Mike, follow that meddling coxcomb, and, as you desire to thrive, see him safely clear of the premises, while I bring this headstrong lady to reason. Draw thy tool, man, and after him.'

'I'll follow him,' said Michael Lambourne, 'and see him fairly out of Flanders. But for hurting a man I have drunk my morning's draught withal, 't is clean against my conscience.' So saying, he left the apartment.

Tressilian, meanwhile, with hasty steps, pursued the first

¹ Two headlands on the Cornish Coast. The expressions are proverbial.

path which promised to conduct him through the wild and overgrown park in which the mansion of Foster was situated. Haste and distress of mind led his steps astray, and, instead of taking the avenue which led towards the village, he chose another, which, after he had pursued it for some time with a hasty and reckless step, conducted him to the other side of the demesne, where a postern door opened through the wall, and led into the open country

Tressilian paused an instant. It was indifferent to him by what road he left a spot now so odious to his recollections, but it was probable that the postern door was locked, and his retreat by that pass rendered impossible

‘I must make the attempt, however,’ he said to himself, ‘the only means of reclaiming this lost — this miserable — this still most lovely and most unhappy girl — must rest in her father’s appeal to the broken laws of his country; I must haste to apprise him of this heart-rending intelligence’

As Tressilian, thus conversing with himself, approached to try some means of opening the door, or climbing over it, he perceived there was a key put into the lock from the outside. It turned round, the bolt revolved, and a cavalier, who entered, muffled in his riding-cloak, and wearing a slouched hat with a drooping feather, stood at once within four yards of him who was desirous of going out. They exclaimed at once, in tones of resentment and surprise, the one ‘Varney!’ the other ‘Tressilian!’

‘What make you here?’ was the stern question put by the stranger to Tressilian, when the moment of surprise was past — ‘what make you here, where your presence is neither expected nor desired?’

‘Nay, Varney,’ replied Tressilian, ‘what make *you* here? Are you come to triumph over the innocence you have destroyed, as the vulture or carrion crow comes to batten on the lamb, whose eyes it has first plucked out? Or are you come to encounter the merited vengeance of an honest man? Draw, dog, and defend thyself!’

Tressilian drew his sword as he spoke, but Varney only laid his hand on the hilt of his own, as he replied, ‘Thou art mad, Tressilian. I own appearances are against me, but by every oath a priest can make, or a man can swear, Mistress Amy Robsart hath had no injury from me, and in truth I were somewhat loth to hurt you in this cause. Thou know’st I can fight.’

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out memory of the morning's draught that we had together. In the meanwhile, do you see shog — tramp — begone, we are two to one.'

He spoke truth, for Varney had taken the opportunity to regain his weapon, and Tressilian perceived it was madness to press the quarrel farther against such odds. He took his purse from his side, and taking out two gold nobles, flung them to Lambourne. 'There, cutiff, is thy morning wage, thou shalt not say thou hast been my guide unhired. Varney, farewell, we shall meet where there are none to come betwixt us.' So saying, he turned round, and departed through the postern door.

Varney seemed to want the inclination, or perhaps the power, for his fall had been a severe one, to follow his retreating enemy. But he glared darkly as he disappeared, and then addressed Lambourne — 'Art thou a comrade of Foster's, good fellow?'

'Sworn friends, as the haft is to the knife,' replied Michael Lambourne.

'Here is a broad piece for thee, follow yonder fellow, and see where he takes earth, and bring me word up to the mansion-house here. Cautious and silent, thou knave, as thou valuest thy throat.'

'Enough said,' replied Lambourne, 'I can draw on a scent as well as a sleuth hound.'

'Begone, then,' said Varney, sheathing his rapier, and, turning his back on Michael Lambourne, he walked slowly towards the house.

Lambourne stopped but an instant to gather the nobles which his late companion had flung towards him so unceremoniously, and muttered to himself, while he put them up in his purse along with the gratuity of Varney, 'I spoke to yonder gulls of Eldorado. By St. Anthony, there is no Eldorado for men of our stamp equal to bonny Old England! It rains nobles, by Heaven, they lie on the grass as thick as dewdrops, you may have them for gathering. And if I have not my share of such glittering dewdrops, may my sword melt like an icicle!'

CHAPTER V

He was a man
Versed in the world as pilot in his compass—
The needle pointed ever to that interest
Which was his lordstar, and he spread his sails
With vantage to the gale of other's passion

The Doctor, a Tragedy.

ANTHONY FOSTER was still engaged in debate with his fair guest, who treated with scorn every entreaty and request that she would retire to her own apartment, when a whistle was heard at the entrance door of the mansion

'We are fairly sped now,' said Foster, 'yonder is thy lord's signal, and what to say about the disorder which has happened in this household, by my conscience, I know not. Some evil fortune dogs the heels of that unhang'd rogue Lambourne, and he has 'scaped the gallows against every chance, to come back and be the ruin of me!'

'Peace, sir,' said the lady, 'and undo the gate to your master. My lord!—my dear lord!' she then exclaimed, hastening to the entrance of the apartment, then added, with a voice expressive of disappointment, 'Pooh! it is but Richard Varney.'

'Ay, madam,' said Varney, entering and saluting the lady with a respectful obeisance, which she returned with a careless mixture of negligence and of displeasure, 'it is but Richard Varney, but even the first grey cloud should be acceptable, when it lightens in the east, because it announces the approach of the blessed sun.'

'How! comes my lord hither to-night?' said the lady, in joyful yet startled agitation; and Anthony Foster caught up the word, and echoed the question. Varney replied to the lady, that his lord purposed to attend her, and would have proceeded with some compliment, when, running to the door of the parlour, she called aloud, 'Janet—Janet, come to my tiring-



THE BLOW WAS ARRESTED BY THE GRASP OF MICHAEL LAMBOURNE



room instantly' Then returning to Varney, she asked if her lord sent any farther commendations to her

'This letter, honoured madam,' said he, taking from his bosom a small parcel wrapt in scarlet silk, 'and with it a token to the queen of his affections' With eager speed the lady hastened to undo the silken string which surrounded the little packet, and failing to unloose readily the knot with which it was secured, she again called loudly on Janet — 'Bring me a knife — scissors — aught that may undo this envious knot!'

'May not my poor poniard serve, honoured madam,' said Varney, presenting a small dagger of exquisite workmanship, which hung in his Turkey-leather sword-belt.

'No, sir,' replied the lady, rejecting the instrument which he offered. 'Steel poniard shall cut no true-love knot of mine'

'It has cut many, however,' said Anthony Foster, half aside, and looking at Varney By this time the knot was disentangled without any other help than the neat and nimble fingers of Janet — a simply-attired, pretty maiden, the daughter of Anthony Foster, who came running at the repeated call of her mistress A necklace of orient pearl, the companion of a perfumed billet, was now hastily produced from the packet. The lady gave the one, after a slight glance, to the charge of her attendant, while she read, or rather devoured, the contents of the other

'Surely, lady,' said Janet, gazing with admiration at the neck-string of pearls, 'the daughters of Tyre wore no fairer neck-jewels than those. And then the posy, "For a neck that is fairer," — each pearl is worth a freehold'

'Each word in this dear paper is worth the whole string, my girl. But come to my tiring-room, girl, we must be brave, my lord comes hither to-night. He bids me grace you, Master Varney, and to me his wish is a law I bid you to a collation in my bower this afternoon, and you, too, Master Foster Give orders that all is fitting, and that suitable preparations be made for my lord's reception to night.' With these words she left the apartment.

'She takes state on her already,' said Varney, 'and distributes the favour of her presence, as if she were already the partner of his dignity Well, it is wise to practise beforehand the part which fortune prepares us to play the young eagle must gaze at the sun, ere he soars on strong wing to meet it.'

'If holding her head aloft,' said Foster, 'will keep her eyes from dazzling, I warrant you the dame will not stoop her crest. She will presently soar beyond reach of my whistle,

Master Varney I promise you, he holds me already in slight regard'

'It is thine own fault, thou sullen, uninventive companion,' answered Varney, 'who know'st no mode of control, save downright brute force. Canst thou not make home pleasant to her with music and toys? Canst thou not make the out-of-doors frightful to her, with tales of goblins? Thou livest here by the churchyard, and hast not even wit enough to raise a ghost, to scare thy females into good discipline.'

'Speak not thus, Master Varney,' said Foster, 'the living I fear not, but I trifle not nor toy with my dead neighbours of the churchyard. I promise you, it requires a good heart to live so near it, worthy Master Holdforth, the afternoon's lecturer of St Antonin's, had a sore fright there the last time he came to visit me.'

'Hold thy superstitious tongue,' answered Varney, 'and while thou talk'st of visiting, answer me, thou paltering knave, how came Tressilian to be at the postern door?'

'Tressilian?' answered Foster, 'what know I of Tressilian? I never heard his name.'

'Why, villain, it was the very Cornish chough to whom old Sir Hugh Robsart destined his pretty Amy, and hither the hot-brained fool has come to look after his fair runaway. There must be some order taken with him, for he thinks he hath wrong, and is not the mean hind that will sit down with it. Luckily he knows nought of my lord, but thinks he has only me to deal with. But how, in the fiend's name, came he hither?'

'Why, with Mike Lambourne, an you must know,' answered Foster.

'And who is Mike Lambourne?' demanded Varney. 'By Heaven! thou wert best set up a bush over thy door, and invite every stroller who passes by to see what thou shouldst keep secret even from the sun and air.'

'Ay! ay! this is a court-like requital of my service to you, Master Richard Varney,' replied Foster. 'Didst thou not charge me to seek out for thee a fellow who had a good sword and an unscrupulous conscience? and was I not busying myself to find a fit man — for, thank Heaven, my acquaintance lies not amongst such companions — when, as Heaven would have it, this tall fellow, who is in all his qualities the very flashing knave thou didst wish, came hither to fix acquaintance upon me in the plenitude of his impudence, and I admitted his claim,

thinking to do you a pleasure, and now see what thanks I get for disgracing myself by converse with him !'

'And did he,' said Varney, 'being such a fellow as thyself, only lacking, I suppose, thy present humour of hypocrisy, which lies as thin over thy hard rufianly heart as gold lacquer upon rusty iron — did he, I say, bring the saintly, sighing Tressilian in his train ?'

'They came together, by Heaven !' said Foster, 'and Tressilian — to speak Heaven's truth — obtained a moment's interview with our pretty moppet while I was talking apart with Lambourne.'

'Improvident villain ! we are both undone,' said Varney 'She has of late been casting many a backward look to her father's halls, whenever her lordly lover leaves her alone Should this preaching fool whistle her back to her old perch, we were but lost men'

'No fear of that, my master,' replied Anthony Foster, 'she is in no mood to stoop to his lure, for she yelled out on seeing him as if an adder had stung her'

'That is good. Canst thou not get from thy daughter an inkling of what passed between them, good Foster ?'

'I tell you plain, Master Varney,' said Foster, 'my daughter shall not enter our purposes or walk in our paths They may suit me well enough, who know how to repent of my misdoings, but I will not have my child's soul committed to peril either for your pleasure or my lord's I may walk among snares and pitfalls myself, because I have discretion, but I will not trust the poor lamb among them'

'Why, thou suspicious fool, I were as averse as thou art that thy baby-faced girl should enter into my plans, or walk to Hell at her father's elbow But indirectly thou mightst gain some intelligence of her ?'

'And so I did, Master Varney,' answered Foster, 'and she said her lady called out upon the sickness of her father'

'Good !' replied Varney, 'that is a hint worth catching, and I will work upon it. But the country must be rid of this Tressilian. I would have cumbered no man about the matter, for I hate him like strong poison — his presence is hemlock to me — and this day I had been rid of him, but that my foot slipped, when, to speak truth, had not thy comrade yonder come to my aid, and held his hand, I should have known by this time whether you and I have been treading the path to Heaven or Hell.'

'And you can speak thus of such a risk?' said Foster. 'You keep a stout heart, Master Varney, for me, if I did not hope to live many years, and to have time for the great work of repentance, I would not go forward with you.'

'Oh! thou shalt live as long as Methuselah,' said Varney, 'and amass as much wealth as Solomon, and thou shalt repent so devoutly that thy repentance shall be more famous than thy villany — and that is a bold word. But for all this, Tressilian must be looked after. Thy ruffian yonder is gone to dog him. It concerns our fortunes, Anthony.'

'Ay — ay,' said Foster, sullenly, 'this it is to be leagued with one who knows not even so much of Scripture as that the labourer is worthy of his hire. I must, as usual, take all the trouble and risk.'

'Risk! and what is the mighty risk, I pray you?' answered Varney. 'This fellow will come prowling again about your demesne or into your house, and if you take him for a house-breaker or a park-breaker, is it not most natural you should welcome him with cold steel or hot lead? Even a mastiff will pull down those who come near his kennel, and who shall blame him?'

'Ay, I have mastiff's work and mastiff's wage among you,' said Foster. 'Here have you, Master Varney, secured a good freehold estate out of this old superstitious foundation, and I have but a poor lease of this mansion under you, voidable at your honour's pleasure.'

'Ay, and thou wouldst fain convert thy leasehold into a copyhold, the thing may chance to happen, Anthony Foster, if thou dost good service for it. But softly, good Anthony, it is not the lending a room or two of this old house for keeping my lord's pretty paroquet — nay, it is not the shutting thy doors and windows to keep her from flying off, that may deserve it. Remember, the manor and tithes are rated at the clear annual value of seventy-nine pounds five shillings and fivepence halfpenny, besides the value of the wood. Come — come, thou must be conscionable, great and secret service may deserve both this and a better thing. And now let thy knave come and pluck off my boots. Get us some dinner, and a cup of thy best wine. I must visit this mavis, brave in apparel, unruffled in aspect, and gay in temper.'

They parted, and at the hour of noon, which was then that of dinner, they again met at their meal, Varney gaily dressed like a courtier of the time, and even Anthony Foster improved

in appearance, as far as dress could amend an exterior so unfavourable.

This alteration did not escape Varney. When the meal was finished, the cloth removed, and they were left to their private discourse — 'Thou art gay as a goldfinch, Anthony,' said Varney, looking at his host, 'methinks, thou wilt whistle a jig anon, but I crave your pardon, that would secure your ejection from the congregation of the zealous botchers, the pure-hearted weavers, and the sanctified bakers of Abingdon, who let their ovens cool while their brains get heated.'

'To answer you in the spirit, Master Varney,' said Foster, 'were — excuse the parable — to fling sacred and precious things before swine. So I will speak to thee in the language of the world, which he who is King of the World hath taught thee to understand, and to profit by in no common measure.'

'Say what thou wilt, honest Tony,' replied Varney, 'for be it according to thine absurd faith, or according to thy most villanous practice, it cannot choose but be rare matter to qualify this cup of Alicant. Thy conversation is relishing and poignant, and beats caviare, dried neat's-tongue, and all other provocatives that give savour to good liquor.'

'Well, then, tell me,' said Anthony Foster, 'is not our good lord and master's turn better served, and his ante chamber more suitably filled, with decent, God-fearing men, who will work his will and their own profit quietly, and without worldly scandal, than that he should be manned, and attended, and followed by such open debauchers and ruffianly swordsmen as Tidesly, Killegrew, this fellow Lambourne, whom you have put me to seek out for you, and other such, who bear the gallows in their face and murder in their right hand — who are a terror to peaceable men, and a scandal to my lord's service?'

'Oh, content you, good Master Anthony Foster,' answered Varney, 'he that flies at all manner of game must keep all kinds of hawks, both short and long-winged. The course my lord holds is no easy one, and he must stand provided at all points with trusty retainers to meet each sort of service. He must have his gay courtier, like myself, to ruffle it in the presence-chamber, and to lay hand on hilt when any speaks in disparagement of my lord's honour —'

'Ay,' said Foster, 'and to whisper a word for him into a fair lady's ear, when he may not approach her himself.'

'Then,' said Varney, going on without appearing to notice the interruption, 'he must have his lawyers — deep, subtle

pioneers — to draw his contracts, his pre contract, and his post contracts, and to find the way to make the most of grants of church lands, and commons, and licenses for monopoly. And he must have physicians who can spice a cup or a cradle. And he must have his cabalists, like Dee and Allan, for conjuring up the devil. And he must have ruffing sword men, who would fight the devil when he is raised and at the wildest. And above all, without prejudice to others, he must have such godly, innocent, Puritanic souls as thou, honest Anthony, who defy Satan, and do his work at the same time.

'You would not say, Master Varney,' said Foster, 'that our good lord and master, whom I hold to be fulfilled in all nobleness, would use such base and sinful means to rise as thy speech points at?'

'Tush, man,' said Varney, 'never look at me with so sad a brow, you trap me not, nor am I in your power, as your weak brain may imagine, because I name to you freely the engines, the springs, the screws, the tackle, and braces, by which great men rise in stirring times. Sayest thou our good lord is fulfilled of all nobleness? Amen, and so be it: he has the more need to have those about him who are unscrupulous in his service, and who, because they know that his fall will overwhelm and crush them, must wager both blood and brain, soul and body, in order to keep him aloft, and this I tell thee, because I care not who knows it.'

'You speak truth, Master Varney,' said Anthony Foster 'he that is head of a party is but a boat on a wave, that raises not itself, but is moved upward by the billow which it floats upon.'

'Thou art metaphorical, honest Anthony,' replied Varney. 'that velvet doublet hath made an oracle of thee, we will have thee to Oxford to take the degrees in the arts. And, in the meantime, hast thou arranged all the matters which were sent from London, and put the western chambers into such fashion as may answer my lord's humour?'

'They may serve a king on his bridal-day,' said Anthony, 'and I promise you that Dame Amy sits in them yonder as proud and gay as if she were the Queen of Sheba.'

'Tis the better, good Anthony,' answered Varney, 'we must found our future fortunes on her good liking.'

'We build on sand then,' said Anthony Foster, 'for, supposing that she sails away to court in all her lord's dignity and authority, how is she to look back upon me, who am her jailor as it were, to detain her here against her will, keeping

her a caterpillar on an old wall, when she would fain be a painted butterfly in a court garden ?'

'Fear not her displeasure, man,' said Varney 'I will show her that all thou hast done in this matter was good service, both to my lord and her, and when she chips the egg shell and walks alone, she shall own we have hatched her greatness.'

'Look to yourself, Master Varney,' said Foster, 'you may misreckon foully in this matter. She gave you but a frosty reception this morning, and, I think, looks on you, as well as me, with an evil eye.'

'You mistake her, Foster—you mistake her utterly. To me she is bound by all the ties which can secure her to one who has been the means of gratifying both her love and ambition. Who was it that took the obscure Amy Robsart, the daughter of an impoverished and dotard knight, the destined bride of a moonstruck, moping enthusiast like Edmund Tressilian, from her lowly fates, and held out to her in prospect the brightest fortune in England, or perchance in Europe? Why, man, it was I—as I have often told thee—that found opportunity for their secret meeting. It was I who watched the wood while he beat for the deer. It was I who, to this day, am blamed by her family as the companion of her flight, and were I in their neighbourhood, would be fain to wear a shirt of better stuff than Holland linen, lest my ribs should be acquainted with Spanish steel. Who carried their letters? I. Who amused the old knight and Tressilian? I. Who planned her escape? It was I. It was I, in short, Dick Varney, who pulled this pretty little daisy from its lowly nook, and placed it in the proudest bonnet in Britain.'

'Ay, Master Varney,' said Foster, 'but it may be she thinks that, had the matter remained with you, the flower had been stuck so slightly into the cap that the first breath of a changeable breeze of passion had blown the poor daisy to the common.'

'She should consider,' said Varney, smiling, 'the true faith I owed my lord and master prevented me at first from counselling marriage, and yet I did counsel marriage when I saw she would not be satisfied without the—the sacrament, or the ceremony—which callest thou it, Anthony?'

'Still she has you at feud on another score,' said Foster, 'and I tell it you that you may look to yourself in time. She would not hide her splendour in this dark lantern of an old monastic house, but would fain shine a countess amongst countesses.'

'Very natural, very right,' answered Varney; 'but what have I to do with that? She may shine through horn or through crystal at my lord's pleasure, I have nought to say against it.'

'She deems that you have an oar upon that side of the boat, Master Varney,' replied Foster, 'and that you can pull it or no, at your good pleasure. In a word, she ascribes the secrecy and obscurity in which she is kept to your secret counsel to my lord, and to my strict agency, and so she loves us both as a sentenced man loves his judge and his jailor.'

'She must love us better ere she leave this place, Anthony,' answered Varney. 'If I have counselled for weighty reasons that she remain here for a season, I can also advise her being brought forth in the full blow of her dignity. But I were mad to do so, holding so near a place to my lord's person, were she mine enemy. Bear this truth in upon her as occasion offers, Anthony, and let me alone for extolling you in her ear, and exalting you in her opinion. Ka me, ka thee — it is a proverb all over the world. The lady must know her friends, and be made to judge of the power they have of being her enemies; meanwhile, watch her strictly, but with all the outward observance that thy rough nature will permit. 'Tis an excellent thing that sullen look and bull-dog humour of thine; thou shouldst thank God for it, and so should my lord, for when there is aught harsh or hard-natured to be done, thou dost it as if it flowed from thine own natural doggedness, and not from orders, and so my lord escapes the scandal. But, hark — some one knocks at the gate. Look out of the window, let no one enter — this were an ill night to be interrupted.'

'It is he whom we spoke of before dinner,' said Foster, as he looked through the casement — 'it is Michael Lambourne.'

'Oh, admit him, by all means,' said the courtier, 'he comes to give some account of his guest. It imports us much to know the movements of Edmund Tressilian. Admit him, I say, but bring him not hither. I will come to you presently in the abbot's library.'

Foster left the room, and the courtier, who remained behind, paced the parlour more than once in deep thought, his arms folded on his bosom, until at length he gave vent to his meditations in broken words, which we have somewhat enlarged and connected, that his soliloquy may be intelligible to the reader.

'Tis true,' he said, suddenly stopping, and resting his right

hand on the table at which they had been sitting, 'this base churl hath fathomed the very depth of my fear, and I have been unable to disguise it from him. She loves me not, I would it were as true that I loved not her! Idiot that I was, to move her in my own behalf, when wisdom bade me be a true broker to my lord! And this fatal error has placed me more at her discretion than a wise man would willingly be at that of the best piece of painted Eve's flesh of them all. Since the hour that my policy made so perilous a ship, I cannot look at her without fear, and hate, and fondness so strangely mingled that I know not whether, were it at my choice, I would rather possess or ruin her. But she must not leave this retreat until I am assured on what terms we are to stand. My lord's interest — and so far it is mine own, for if he sinks I fall in his train — demands concealment of this obscure marriage, and, besides, I will not lend her my arm to climb to her chair of state, that she may set her foot on my neck when she is fairly seated. I must work an interest in her, either through love or through fear, and who knows but I may yet reap the sweetest and best revenge for her former scorn? — that were indeed a masterpiece of court-like art! Let me but once be her counsel-keeper, let her confide to me a secret, did it but concern the robbery of a linnet's nest, and, fair countess, thou art mine own!' He again paced the room in silence, stopped, filled and drank a cup of wine, as if to compose the agitation of his mind, and muttering, 'Now for a close heart and an open and unruffled brow,' he left the apartment.



CHAPTER VI

The days of summer night did fall,
The moon, sweet regent of the sky,
Silver'd the walls of Cumnor Hall,
And many an oak that grew thereby.¹

MICAH

FOUR apartments, which occupied the western side of the old quadrangle at Cumnor Place, had been fitted up with extraordinary splendour. This had been the work of several days prior to that on which our story opened. Workmen sent from London, and not permitted to leave the premises until the work was finished, had converted the apartments in that side of the building from the dilapidated appearance of a dissolved monastic house into the semblance of a royal palace. A mystery was observed in all these arrangements: the workmen came thither and returned by night, and all measures were taken to prevent the prying curiosity of the villagers from observing or speculating upon the changes which were taking place in the mansion of their once indigent, but now wealthy, neighbour Anthony Foster. Accordingly, the secrecy desired was so far preserved that nothing got abroad but vague and uncertain reports, which were received and repeated, but without much credit being attached to them.

On the evening of which we treat, the new and highly decorated suite of rooms were for the first time illuminated, and that with a brilliancy which might have been visible half a dozen miles off, had not oaken shutters, carefully secured with bolt and padlock, and mantled with long curtains of silk and of velvet, deeply fringed with gold, prevented the slightest gleam of radiance from being seen without.

The principal apartments, as we have seen, were four in number, each opening into the other. Access was given to

¹ This verse is the commencement of the ballad already quoted as what suggested the novel.

them by a large scale staircase, as they were then called, of unusual length and height, which had its landing-place at the door of an ante chamber, shaped somewhat like a gallery. This apartment the abbot had used as an occasional council-room, but it was now beautifully wainscotted with dark foreign wood of a brown colour, and bearing a high polish, said to have been brought from the Western Indies, and to have been wrought in London with infinite difficulty, and much damage to the tools of the workmen. The dark colour of this finishing was relieved by the number of lights in silver sconces which hung against the walls, and by six large and richly-framed pictures by the first masters of the age. A massy oaken table, placed at the lower end of the apartment, served to accommodate such as chose to play at the then fashionable game of shovel-board, and there was at the other end an elevated gallery for the musicians or minstrels, who might be summoned to increase the festivity of the evening.

From this ante chamber opened a banqueting-room of moderate size, but brilliant enough to dazzle the eyes of the spectator with the richness of its furniture. The walls, lately so bare and ghastly, were now clothed with hangings of sky-blue velvet and silver, the chairs were of ebony, richly carved, with cushions corresponding to the hangings, and the place of the silver sconces which enlightened the ante chamber was supplied by a huge chandelier of the same precious metal. The floor was covered with a Spanish foot-cloth, or carpet, on which flowers and fruits were represented in such glowing and natural colours that you hesitated to place the foot on such exquisite workmanship. The table, of old English oak, stood ready covered with the finest linen, and a large portable court-cupboard was placed with the leaves of its embossed folding-doors displayed, showing the shelves within, decorated with a full display of plate and porcelain. In the midst of the table stood a salt-cellar of Italian workmanship — a beautiful and splendid piece of plate about two feet high, moulded into a representation of the giant Briareus, whose hundred hands of silver presented to the guest various sorts of spices, or condiments, to season their food withal.

The third apartment was called the withdrawing-room. It was hung with the finest tapestry, representing the fall of Phaeton, for the looms of Flanders were now much occupied on classical subjects. The principal seat of this apartment was a chair of state, raised a step or two from the floor, and large enough to contain two persons. It was surmounted by a

canopy, which, as well as the cushions, etc curtains, and the very foot-cloth, was composed of crimson velvet, embroidered with seed-pearl. On the top of the canopy were two coronets, resembling those of an earl and countess. Stools covered with velvet, and some cushions disposed in the Moorish fashion, and ornamented with Arabesque needlework, supplied the place of chairs in this apartment, which contained musical instruments, embroidery frames, and other articles for ladies' pastime. Besides lesser lights, the withdrawing-room was illuminated by four tall torches of virgin wax, each of which was placed in the grasp of a statue, representing an armed Moor, who held in his left arm a round buckler of silver, highly polished, interposed betwixt his breast and the light, which was thus brilliantly reflected as from a crystal mirror.

The sleeping-chamber belonging to this splendid suite of apartments was decorated in a taste less showy, but not less rich, than had been displayed in the others. Two silver lamps, fed with perfumed oil, diffused at once a delicious odour and a trembling twilight-seeming shimmer through the quiet apartment. It was carpeted so thick that the heaviest step could not have been heard, and the bed, richly heaped with down, was spread with an ample coverlet of silk and gold, from under which peeped forth cambric sheets, and blankets as white as the lambs which yielded the fleece that made them. The curtains were of blue velvet, lined with crimson silk, deeply festooned with gold, and embroidered with the loves of Cupid and Psyche. On the toilet was a beautiful Venetian mirror, in a frame of silver filigree, and beside it stood a gold posset-dish to contain the night-draught. A pair of pistols and a dagger, mounted with gold, were displayed near the head of the bed, being the arms for the night, which were presented to honoured guests, rather, it may be supposed, in the way of ceremony than from any apprehension of danger. We must not omit to mention, what was more to the credit of the manners of the time, that in a small recess, illuminated by a taper, were disposed two cassocks of velvet and gold, corresponding with the bed furniture, before a desk of carved ebony. This recess had formerly been the private oratory of the abbot, but the crucifix was removed, and instead there were placed on the desk two Books of Common Prayer, richly bound and embossed with silver. With this enviable sleeping-apartment, which was so far removed from every sound, save that of the wind sighing among the oaks of the park, that Morpheus might have coveted it for

his own proper repose, corresponded two wardrobes, or dressing-rooms, as they are now termed, suitably furnished, and in a style of the same magnificence which we have already described. It ought to be added, that a part of the building in the adjoining wing was occupied by the kitchen and its offices, and served to accommodate the personal attendants of the great and wealthy nobleman for whose use these magnificent preparations had been made.

The divinity for whose sake this temple had been decorated was well worthy the cost and pains which had been bestowed. She was seated in the withdrawing-room which we have described, surveying with the pleased eye of natural and innocent vanity the splendour which had been so suddenly created, as it were, in her honour. For, as her own residence at Cumnor Place formed the cause of the mystery observed in all the preparations for opening these apartments, it was sedulously arranged that, until she took possession of them, she should have no means of knowing what was going forward in that part of the ancient building, or of exposing herself to be seen by the workmen engaged in the decorations. She had been, therefore, introduced on that evening to a part of the mansion which she had never yet seen, so different from all the rest that it appeared, in comparison, like an enchanted palace. And when she first examined and occupied these splendid rooms, it was with the wild and unrestrained joy of a rustic beauty, who finds herself suddenly invested with a splendour which her most extravagant wishes had never imagined, and at the same time with the keen feeling of an affectionate heart, which knows that all the enchantment that surrounds her is the work of the great magician Love.

The Countess Amy, therefore—for to that rank she was exalted by her private but solemn union with England's proudest earl—had for a time flitted hastily from room to room, admiring each new proof of her lover and her bridegroom's taste, and feeling that admiration enhanced, as she recollected that all she gazed upon was one continued proof of his ardent and devoted affection. 'How beautiful are these hangings!' How natural these paintings, which seem to contend with life! How richly wrought is that plate, which looks as if all the galleons of Spain had been intercepted on the broad seas to furnish it forth! And oh, Janet!' she exclaimed repeatedly to the daughter of Anthony Foster, the close attendant, who, with equal curiosity, but somewhat less ecstatic joy, followed on her mistress's foot-

steps — 'Oh, Janet' how much more delightful to think that all these fair things have been assembled by his love, for the love of me! and that this evening — this very evening, which grows darker every instant, I shall thank him more for the love that has created such an unimaginable paradise than for all the wonders it contains'

'The Lord is to be thanked first,' said the pretty Puritan, 'who gave thee, lady, the kind and courteous husband whose love has done so much for thee. I, too, have done my poor share, but if you thus run wildly from room to room, the toil of my crissing and my curling pins will vanish like the frost-work on the window when the sun is high'

'Thou sayest true, Janet,' said the young and beautiful countess, stopping suddenly from her tripping race of enraptured delight, and looking at herself from head to foot in a large mirror, such as she had never before seen, and which, indeed, had few to match it even in the Queen's palace — 'thou sayest true, Janet!' she answered, as she saw, with pardonable self-applause, the noble mirror reflect such charms as were seldom presented to its fair and polished surface, 'I have more of the milk-maid than the countess, with these cheeks flushed with haste, and all these brown curls, which you laboured to bring to order, straying as wild as the tendrils of an unpruned vine. My falling ruff is chafed too, and shows the neck and bosom more than is modest and seemly. Come, Janet, we will practise state — we will go to the withdrawing-room, my good girl, and thou shalt put these rebel locks in order, and imprison within lace and cambric the bosom that beats too high'

They went to the withdrawing-apartment accordingly, where the countess playfully stretched herself upon the pile of Moorish cushions, half-sitting, half-reclining, half-wrapt in her own thoughts, half-listening to the prattle of her attendant.

While she was in this attitude, and with a corresponding expression betwixt listlessness and expectation on her fine and expressive features, you might have searched sea and land without finding anything half so expressive or half so lovely. The wreath of brilliants which mixed with her dark brown hair did not match in lustre the hazel eye which a light brown eyebrow, pencilled with exquisite delicacy, and long eyelashes of the same colour, relieved and shaded. The exercise she had just taken, her excited expectation and gratified vanity, spread a glow over her fine features, which had been sometimes



ROBERT DUDLEY EARL OF LEICESTER
From a painting by Federico Zuccaro

censured (as beauty as well as art has her minute critics) for being rather too pale. The milk white pearls of the necklace which she wore, the same which she had just received as a true-love token from her husband, were excelled in purity by her teeth, and by the colour of her skin, saving where the blush of pleasure and self-satisfaction had somewhat stained the neck with a shade of light crimson. 'Now, have done with these busy fingers, Janet,' she said to her handmaiden, who was still officiously employed in bringing her hair and her dress into order — 'have done, I say, I must see your father ere my lord arrives, and also Master Richard Varney, whom my lord has highly in his esteem — but I could tell that of him would lose him favour.'

'Oh, do not do so, good my lady!' replied Janet. 'leave him to God, who punishes the wicked in His own time, but do not you cross Varney's path, for so thoroughly hath he my lord's ear, that few have thriven who have thwarted his courses.'

'And from whom had you this, my most righteous Janet?' said the countess, 'or why should I keep terms with so mean a gentleman as Varney, being, as I am, wife to his master and patron?'

'Nay, madam,' replied Janet Foster, 'your ladyship knows better than I. But I have heard my father say he would rather cross a hungry wolf than thwart Richard Varney in his projects. And he has often charged me to have a care of holding commerce with him.'

'Thy father said well, girl, for thee,' replied the lady, 'and I dare swear meant well. It is a pity, though, his face and manner do little match his true purpose, for I think his purpose may be true.'

'Doubt it not, my lady,' answered Janet — 'doubt not that my father purposes well, though he is a plain man, and his blunt looks may belie his heart.'

'I will not doubt it, girl, were it only for thy sake, and yet he has one of those faces which men tremble when they look on. I think even thy mother, Janet — nay, have done with that poking-iron — could hardly look upon him without quaking.'

'If it were so, madam,' answered Janet Foster, 'my mother had those who could keep her in honourable countenance. Why, even you, my lady, both trembled and blushed when Varney brought the letter from my lord.'

'You are bold, damsel,' said the countess, rising from the cushions on which she sate half-reclined in the arms of her at-

tendant 'Know, that there are causes of trembling which have nothing to do with fear. But, Janet,' she added, immediately relapsing into the good-natured and familiar tone which was natural to her, 'believe me I will do what credit I can to your father, and the rather that you, sweetheart, are his child. Alas! alas!' she added, a sudden sadness passing over her fine features and her eyes filling with tears, 'I ought the rather to hold sympathy with thy kind heart that my own poor father is uncertain of my fate, and they say he's sick and sorrowful for my worthless sake! But I will soon cheer him—the news of my happiness and advancement will make him young again. And that I may cheer him the sooner'—she wiped her eyes as she spoke—'I must be cheerful myself. My lord must not find me insensible to his kindness, or sorrowful when he snatches a visit to his recluse, after so long an absence. Be merry, Janet: the night wears on, and my lord must soon arrive. Call thy father hither, and call Varney also. I cherish resentment against neither, and though I may have some room to be displeased with both, it shall be their own fault if ever a complaint against them reaches the earl through my means. Call them hither, Janet.'

Janet Foster obeyed her mistress, and in a few minutes after, Varney entered the withdrawing-room with the graceful ease and unclouded front of an accomplished courtier, skilled, under the veil of external politeness, to disguise his own feelings and to penetrate those of others. Anthony Foster plodded into the apartment after him, his natural gloomy vulgarity of aspect seeming to become yet more remarkable from his clumsy attempt to conceal the mixture of anxiety and dislike with which he looked on her over whom he had hitherto exercised so severe a control, now so splendidly attired, and decked with so many pledges of the interest which she possessed in her husband's affections. The blundering reverence which he made, rather *at* than *to* the countess, had confession in it. It was like the reverence which the criminal makes to the judge, when he at once owns his guilt and implores mercy, which is at the same time an impudent and embarrassed attempt at defence or extenuation, a confession of a fault, and an entreaty for lenity.

Varney, who, in right of his gentle blood, had pressed into the room before Anthony Foster, knew better what to say than he, and said it with more assurance and a better grace.

The countess greeted him indeed with an appearance of

cordiality, which seemed a complete amnesty for whatever she might have to complain of. She rose from her seat and advanced two steps towards him, holding forth her hand as she said, 'Master Richard Varney, you brought me this morning such welcome tidings that I fear surprise and joy made me neglect my lord and husband's charge to receive you with distinction. We offer you our hand, sir, in reconciliation.'

'I am unworthy to touch it,' said Varney, dropping on one knee, 'save as a subject honours that of a prince.'

He touched with his lips those fair and slender fingers, so richly loaded with rings and jewels, then rising, with graceful gallantry, was about to hand her to the chair of state, when she said, 'No, good Master Richard Varney, I take not my place there until my lord himself conducts me. I am for the present but a disguised countess, and will not take dignity on me until authorised by him whom I derive it from.'

'I trust, my lady,' said Foster, 'that in doing the commands of my lord your husband, in your restraint and so forth, I have not incurred your displeasure, seeing that I did but my duty towards your lord and mine, for Heaven, as Holy Writ saith, hath given the husband supremacy and dominion over the wife—I think it runs so, or something like it.'

'I receive at this moment so pleasant a surprise, Master Foster,' answered the countess, 'that I cannot but excuse the rigid fidelity which secluded me from these apartments until they had assumed an appearance so new and so splendid.'

'Ay, lady,' said Foster, 'it hath cost many a fair crown, and that more need not be wasted than is absolutely necessary, I leave you till my lord's arrival with good Master Richard Varney, who, as I think, hath somewhat to say to you from your most noble lord and husband. Janet, follow me, to see that all be in order.'

'No, Master Foster,' said the countess, 'we will your daughter remains here in our apartment, out of ear shot, however, in case Varney hath aught to say to me from my lord.'

Foster made his clumsy reverence and departed, with an aspect that seemed to grudge the profuse expense which had been wasted upon changing his house from a bare and ruinous grange to an Asiatic palace. When he was gone, his daughter took her embroidery frame and went to establish herself at the bottom of the apartment, while Richard Varney, with a profoundly humble courtesy, took the lowest stool he could find, and placing it by the side of the pile of cushions on which the

countess had now again seated herself, sat with his eyes for a time fixed on the ground, and in profound silence

'I thought, Master Varney,' said the countess, when she saw he was not likely to open the conversation, 'that you had something to communicate from my lord and husband, so at least I understood Master Foster, and therefore I removed my waiting-maid. If I am mistaken, I will recall her to my side; for her needle is not so absolutely perfect in tent and cross-stitch but that my superintendence is advisable'

'Lady,' said Varney, 'Foster was partly mistaken in my purpose. It was not *from* but *of* your noble husband, and my approved and most noble patron, that I am led, and indeed bound, to speak'

'The theme is most welcome, sir,' said the countess, 'whether it be of or from my noble husband. But be brief, for I expect his hasty approach'

'Briefly then, madam,' replied Varney, 'and boldly, for my argument requires both haste and courage — you have this day seen Tressilian?'

'I have, sir, and what of that?' answered the lady, somewhat sharply

'Nothing that concerns me, lady,' Varney replied with humility. 'But, think you, honoured madam, that your lord will hear it with equal equanimity?'

'And wherefore should he not? To me alone was Tressilian's visit embarrassing and painful, for he brought news of my good father's illness'

'Of your father's illness, madam!' answered Varney. 'It must have been sudden then — very sudden, for the messenger whom I despatched, at my lord's instance, found the good knight on the hunting-field, cheering his beagles with his wonted jovial field-cry. I trust Tressilian has but forged this news. He hath his reasons, madam, as you well know, for disquieting your present happiness'

'You do him injustice, Master Varney,' replied the countess, with animation — 'you do him much injustice. He is the freest, the most open, the most gentle heart that breathes. My honourable lord ever excepted, I know not one to whom falsehood is more odious than to Tressilian'

'I crave your pardon, madam,' said Varney, 'I meant the gentleman no injustice — I knew not how nearly his cause affected you. A man may, in some circumstances, disguise the truth for fair and honest purpose, for were it to be

always spoken, and upon all occasions, this were no world to live in.'

'You have a courtly conscience, Master Varney,' said the countess, 'and your veracity will not, I think, interrupt your preferment in the world, such as it is. But touching Tressilian — I must do him justice, for I have done him wrong, as none knows better than thou. Tressilian's conscience is of other mould. The world thou speakest of has not that which could bribe him from the way of truth and honour, and for living in it with a soiled fame, the ermine would as soon seek to lodge in the den of the foul polecat. For this my father loved him. For this I would have loved him — if I could. And yet in this case he had what seemed to him, unknowing alike of my marriage and to whom I was united, such powerful reasons to withdraw me from this place, that I well trust he exaggerated much of my father's indisposition, and that thy better news may be the truer.'

'Believe me they are, madam,' answered Varney. 'I pretend not to be a champion of that same naked virtue called truth to the very outrance. I can consent that her charms be hidden with a veil, were it but for decency's sake. But you must think lower of my head and heart than is due to one whom my noble lord dares to call his friend, if you suppose I could necessarily palm upon your ladyship a falsehood detected, in a matter which concerns your happiness.'

'Master Varney,' said the countess, 'I know that my lord esteems you, and holds you a faithful and a good pilot in those seas in which he has spread so high and so venturous a sail. Do not suppose, therefore, I meant hardly by you when I spoke the truth in Tressilian's vindication. I am, as you well know, country-bred, and like plain rustic truth better than courtly compliment, but I must change my fashions with my sphere, I presume.'

'True, madam,' said Varney, smiling, 'and though you speak now in jest, it will not be amiss that in earnest your present speech had some connexion with your real purpose. A court dame — take the most noble — the most virtuous — the most unimpeachable, that stands around our Queen's throne — would, for example, have shunned to speak the truth, or what she thought such, in praise of a discarded suitor, before the dependant and confidant of her noble husband.'

'And wherefore,' said the countess, colouring impatiently,

‘should I not do justice to Tressilian’s worth before my husband’s friend — before my husband himself — before the whole world?’

‘And with the same openness,’ said Varney, ‘your ladyship will this night tell my noble lord your husband that Tressilian has discovered your place of residence, so anxiously concealed from the world, and that he has had an interview with you?’

‘Unquestionably,’ said the countess ‘It will be the first thing I tell him, together with every word that Tressilian said, and that I answered I shall speak my own shame in this, for Tressilian’s reproaches, less just than he esteemed them, were not altogether unmerited — I will speak, therefore, with pain, but I will speak, and speak all.’

‘Your ladyship will do your pleasure,’ answered Varney, ‘but methinks it were as well, since nothing calls for so frank a disclosure, to spare yourself this pain, and my noble lord the disquiet, and Master Tressilian, since belike he must be thought of in the matter, the danger which is like to ensue’

‘I can see nought of all these terrible consequences,’ said the lady, composedly, ‘unless by imputing to my noble lord unworthy thoughts, which I am sure never harboured in his generous heart’

‘Far be it from me to do so,’ said Varney And then, after a moment’s silence, he added, with a real or affected plainness of manner very different from his usual smooth courtesy — ‘Come, madam, I will show you that a courtier dare speak truth as well as another, when it concerns the weal of those whom he honours and regards, ay, and although it may infer his own danger’ He waited as if to receive commands, or at least permission, to go on, but as the lady remained silent, he proceeded, but obviously with caution. ‘Look around you,’ he said, ‘noble lady, and observe the barriers with which this place is surrounded, the studious mystery with which the brightest jewel that England possesses is secluded from the admiring gaze See with what rigour your walks are circumscribed, and your movements restrained at the beck of yonder churlish Foster Consider all this, and judge for yourself what can be the cause’

‘My lord’s pleasure,’ answered the countess, ‘and I am bound to seek no other motive’

‘His pleasure it is indeed,’ said Varney, ‘and his pleasure arises out of a love worthy of the object which inspires it But he who possesses a treasure, and who values it, is oft

anxious, in proportion to the value he puts upon it, to secure it from the depredations of others'

'What needs all this talk, Master Varney?' said the lady, in reply 'You would have me believe that my noble lord is jealous? Suppose it true, I know a cure for jealousy'

'Indeed, madam!' said Varney

'It is,' replied the lady, 'to speak the truth to my lord at all times, to hold up my mind and my thoughts before him as pure as that polished mirror, so that when he looks into my heart he shall only see his own features reflected there'

'I am mute, madam,' answered Varney, 'and as I have no reason to grieve for Tressilian, who would have my heart's blood were he able, I shall reconcile myself easily to what may befall the gentleman in consequence of your frank disclosure of his having presumed to intrude upon your solitude. You, who know my lord so much better than I, will judge if he be likely to bear the insult unavenged.'

'Nay, if I could think myself the cause of Tressilian's ruin,' said the countess — 'I who have already occasioned him so much distress, I might be brought to be silent. And yet what will it avail, since he was seen by Foster, and I think by some one else? No, no, Varney, urge it no more. I will tell the whole matter to my lord, and with such pleading for Tressilian's folly as shall dispose my lord's generous heart rather to serve than to punish him'

'Your judgment, madam,' said Varney, 'is far superior to mine, especially as you may, if you will, prove the ice before you step on it, by mentioning Tressilian's name to my lord, and observing how he endures it. For Foster and his attendant, they know not Tressilian by sight, and I can easily give them some reasonable excuse for the appearance of an unknown stranger'

The lady paused for an instant, and then replied, 'If, Varney, it be indeed true that Foster knows not as yet that the man he saw was Tressilian, I own I were unwilling he should learn what nowise concerns him. He bears himself already with austerity enough, and I wish him not to be judge or privy-councillor in my affairs.'

'Tush,' said Varney, 'what has the surly groom to do with your ladyship's concerns? No more, surely, than the ban dog which watches his courtyard. If he is in aught distasteful to your ladyship, I have interest enough to have him exchanged for a seneschal that shall be more agreeable to you'

‘Master Varney,’ said the countess, ‘let us drop this theme : when I complain of the attendants whom my lord has placed around me, it must be to my lord himself Hark ! I hear the trampling of horse He comes ! — he comes !’ she exclaimed, jumping up in ecstasy

‘I cannot think it is he,’ said Varney, ‘or that you can hear the tread of his horse through the closely mantled casements’

‘Stop me not, Varney, my ears are keener than thine — it is he !’

‘But, madam ! — but, madam !’ exclaimed Varney, anxiously, and still placing himself in her way, ‘I trust that what I have spoken in humble duty and service will not be turned to my ruin. I hope that my faithful advice will not be bewrayed to my prejudice I implore that ——’

‘Content thee, man — content thee !’ said the countess, ‘and quit my skirt you are too bold to detain me Content thyself, I think not of thee’

At this moment the folding-doors flew wide open, and a man of majestic mien, muffled in the folds of a long dark riding-cloak, entered the apartment

CHAPTER VII

This is he
Who rides on the court gale controls its tides,
Knows all their secret shoals and fatal eddies,
Whose frown abases, and whose smile exalts.
He shines like any rainbow—and, perchance,
His colours are as transient.

Old Play

THERE was some little displeasure and confusion on the countess's brow, owing to her struggle with Varney's portinacity, but it was exchanged for an expression of the purest joy and affection, as she threw herself into the arms of the noble stranger who entered, and clasping him to her bosom, exclaimed, 'At length—at length thou art come!'

Varney discreetly withdrew as his lord entered, and Janet was about to do the same, when her mistress signed to her to remain. She took her place at the farther end of the apartment, and continued standing, as if ready for attendance.

Meanwhile the earl, for he was of no inferior rank, returned his lady's caress with the most affectionate ardour, but affected to resist when she strove to take his cloak from him.

'Nay,' she said, 'but I will unmantle you—I must see if you have kept your word to me, and come as the great earl men call thee, and not as heretofore like a private cavalier.'

'Thou art like the rest of the world, Amy,' said the earl, suffering her to prevail in the playful contest 'the jewels, and feathers, and silk are more to them than the man whom they adorn—many a poor blade looks gay in a velvet scabbard.'

'But so cannot men say of thee, thou noble earl,' said his lady, as the cloak dropped on the floor, and showed him dressed as princes when they ride abroad, 'thou art the good and well-tried steel, whose only worth deserves, yet disdains, its outward ornaments. Do not think Amy can love thee better in this glorious garb than she did when she gave her heart to him who wore the russet-brown cloak in the woods of Devon.'

'And thou too,' said the earl, as gracefully and majestically he led his beautiful countess towards the chair of state which was prepared for them both — 'thou too, my love, hast donned a dress which becomes thy rank, though it cannot improve thy beauty. What think'st thou of our court taste?'

The lady cast a sidelong glance upon the great mirror as they passed it by, and then said, 'I know not how it is, but I think not of my own person while I look at the reflection of thine. Sit thou there,' she said, as they approached the chair of state, 'like a thing for men to worship and to wonder at.'

'Ay, love,' said the earl, 'if thou wilt share my state with me.'

'Not so,' said the countess, 'I will sit on this footstool at thy feet, that I may spell over thy splendour, and learn, for the first time, how princes are attired.'

And with a childish wonder which her youth and rustic education rendered not only excusable but becoming, mixed as it was with a delicate show of the most tender conjugal affection, she examined and admired from head to foot the noble form and princely attire of him who formed the proudest ornament of the court of England's Maiden Queen, renowned as it was for splendid courtiers, as well as for wise counsellors. Regarding affectionately his lovely bride, and gratified by her unrepressed admiration, the dark eye and noble features of the earl expressed passions more gentle than the commanding and aspiring look which usually sat upon his broad forehead and in the piercing brilliancy of his dark eye, and he smiled at the simplicity which dictated the questions she put to him concerning the various ornaments with which he was decorated.

'The embroidered strap, as thou callest it, around my knee,' he said, 'is the English Garter — an ornament which kings are proud to wear. See, here is the star which belongs to it, and here the Diamond George, the jewel of the order. You have heard how King Edward and the Countess of Salisbury —'

'Oh, I know all that tale,' said the countess, slightly blushing, 'and how a lady's garter became the proudest badge of English chivalry.'

'Even so,' said the earl, 'and this most honourable order I had the good hap to receive at the same time with three most noble associates — the Duke of Norfolk, the Marquis of Northampton, and the Earl of Rutland. I was the lowest of the four in rank, but what then? he that climbs a ladder must begin at the first round.'

'But this other fair collar, so richly wrought, with some jewel like a sheep hung by the middle attached to it, what,' said the young countess, 'does that emblem signify?'

'This collar,' said the earl, 'with its double fusilles interchanged with these knobs, which are supposed to present flint-stones, sparkling with fire, and sustaining the jewel you inquire about, is the badge of the noble order of the Golden Fleece, once appertaining to the house of Burgundy. It hath high privileges, my Amy, belonging to it, this most noble order, for even the king of Spain himself, who hath now succeeded to the honours and demesnes of Burgundy, may not sit in judgment upon a knight of the Golden Fleece, unless by assistance and consent of the great chapter of the order.'

'And is this an order belonging to the cruel king of Spain?' said the countess. 'Alas! my noble lord, that you will defile your noble English breast by bearing such an emblem! Bethink you of the most unhappy Queen Mary's days, when this same Philip held sway with her in England, and of the piles which were built for our noblest, and our wisest, and our most truly sanctified prelates and divines. And will you, whom men call the standard-bearer of the true Protestant faith, be contented to wear the emblem and mark of such a Romish tyrant as he of Spain?'

'Oh, content you, my love,' answered the earl, 'we who spread our sails to gales of court favour cannot always display the ensigns we love the best, or at all times refuse sailing under colours which we like not. Believe me, I am not the less good Protestant that for policy I must accept the honour offered me by Spain, in admitting me to this his highest order of knighthood. Besides, it belongs properly to Flanders, and Egmont, Orange, and others have pride in seeing it displayed on an English bosom.'

'Nay, my lord, you know your own path best,' replied the countess. 'And this other collar, to what country does this fair jewel belong?'

'To a very poor one, my love,' replied the earl. 'this is the order of St. Andrew, revived by the last James of Scotland. It was bestowed on me when it was thought the young widow of France and Scotland would gladly have wedded an English baron, but a free coronet of England is worth a crown matrimonial held at the humour of a woman, and owning only the poor rocks and bogs of the north.'

The countess paused, as if what the earl last said had

excited some painful but interesting train of thought, and, as she still remained silent, her husband proceeded.

‘And now, loveliest, your wish is gratified, and you have seen your vassal in such of his trim array as accords with riding vestments, for robes of state and coronets are only for princely halls’

‘Well, then,’ said the countess, ‘my gratified wish has, as usual, given rise to a new one’

‘And what is it thou canst ask that I can deny?’ said the fond husband

‘I wished to see my earl visit this obscure and secret bower,’ said the countess, ‘in all his princely array, and now, methinks, I long to sit in one of his princely halls, and see him enter dressed in sober russet, as when he won poor Amy Robsart’s heart’

‘That is a wish easily granted,’ said the earl, ‘the sober russet shall be donned to-morrow, if you will’

‘But shall I,’ said the lady, ‘go with you to one of your castles, to see how the richness of your dwelling will correspond with your peasant habit?’

‘Why, Amy,’ said the earl, looking around, ‘are not these apartments decorated with sufficient splendour? I gave the most unbounded order, and, methinks, it has been indifferently well obeyed, but if thou canst tell me aught which remains to be done, I will instantly give direction’

‘Nay, my lord, now you mock me,’ replied the countess; ‘the gaiety of this rich lodging exceeds my imagination as much as it does my desert. But shall not your wife, my love — at least one day soon — be surrounded with the honour which arises neither from the toils of the mechanic who decks her apartment nor from the silks and jewels with which your generosity adorns her, but which is attached to her place among the matronage, as the avowed wife of England’s noblest earl?’

‘One day!’ said her husband. ‘Yes, Amy, my love, one day this shall surely happen, and, believe me, thou canst not wish for that day more fondly than I. With what rapture could I retire from labours of state, and cares and toils of ambition, to spend my life in dignity and honour on my own broad domains, with thee, my lovely Amy, for my friend and companion! But, Amy, this cannot yet be, and these dear but stolen interviews are all I can give to the loveliest and the best beloved of her sex.’

'But *why* can it not be?' urged the countess, in the softest tones of persuasion 'Why can it not immediately take place — this more perfect, this uninterrupted union, for which you say you wish, and which the laws of God and man alike command? Ah! did you but desire it half as much as you say, mighty and favoured as you are, who or what should bar your attaining your wish?'

The earl's brow was overcast.

'Amy,' he said, 'you speak of what you understand not. We that toil in courts are like those who climb a mountain of loose sand — we dare make no halt until some projecting rock affords us a secure footing and resting-place, if we pause sooner, we slide down by our own weight, an object of universal derision. I stand high, but I stand not secure enough to follow my own inclination. To declare my marriage were to be the artificer of my own ruin. But, believe me, I will reach a point, and that speedily, when I can do justice to thee and to myself. Meantime, poison not the bliss of the present moment by desiring that which cannot at present be. Let me rather know whether all here is managed to thy liking. How does Foster bear himself to you? in all things respectful, I trust, else the fellow shall dearly rue it.'

'He reminds me sometimes of the necessity of this privacy,' answered the lady, with a sigh, 'but that is reminding me of your wishes, and therefore I am rather bound to him than disposed to blame him for it.'

'I have told you the stern necessity which is upon us,' replied the earl. 'Foster is, I note, somewhat sullen of mood, but Varney warrants to me his fidelity and devotion to my service. If thou hast aught, however, to complain of the mode in which he discharges his duty, he shall atone it.'

'Oh, I have nought to complain of,' answered the lady, 'so he discharges his task with fidelity to you, and his daughter Janet is the kindest and best companion of my solitude, her little air of precision sits so well upon her!'

'Is she indeed?' said the earl, 'she who gives you pleasure must not pass unrewarded. Come hither, damsel.'

'Janet,' said the lady, 'come hither to my lord.'

Janet, who, as we already noticed, had discreetly retired to some distance, that her presence might be no check upon the private conversation of her lord and lady, now came forward, and as she made her reverential courtesy, the earl could not help smiling at the contrast which the extreme simplicity of her

dress, and the prim demureness of her looks, made with a very pretty countenance and a pair of black eyes, that laughed in spite of their mistress's desire to look grave

'I am bound to you, pretty damsel,' said the earl, 'for the contentment which your service hath given to this lady' As he said this he took from his finger a ring of some price, and offered it to Janet Foster, adding, 'Wear this, for her sake and for mine'

'I am well pleased, my lord,' answered Janet, demurely, 'that my poor service hath gratified my lady, whom no one can draw nigh to without desiring to please, but we of the precious Master Holdforth's congregation seek not, like the gay daughters of this world, to twine gold around our fingers, or wear stones upon our necks, like the vain women of Tyre and of Sidon.'

'Oh, what! you are a grave professor of the precise sisterhood, pretty Mistress Janet,' said the earl, 'and I think your father is of the same congregation in sincerity. I like you both the better for it, for I have been prayed for and wished well to, in your congregations And you may the better afford the lack of ornament, Mistress Janet, because your fingers are slender and your neck white But here is what neither Papist nor Puritan, latitudinarian nor precisian, ever boggles or makes mouths at E'en take it, my girl, and employ it as you list.'

So saying, he put into her hand five broad gold pieces of Philip and Mary

'I would not accept this gold neither,' said Janet, 'but that I hope to find a use for it which will bring a blessing on us all'

'Even please thyself, pretty Janet,' said the earl, 'and I shall be well satisfied And I prithee let them hasten the evening collation'

'I have bidden Master Varney and Master Foster to sup with us, my lord,' said the countess, as Janet retired to obey the earl's commands, 'has it your approbation?'

'What you do ever must have so, my sweet Amy,' replied her husband, 'and I am the better pleased thou hast done them this grace, because Richard Varney is my sworn man, and a close brother of my secret council, and for the present I must needs repose much trust in this Anthony Foster'

'I had a boon to beg of thee, and a secret to tell thee, my dear lord,' said the countess, with a faltering accent

'Let both be for to-morrow, my love,' replied the earl. 'I

see they open the folding-doors into the banqueting-parlour, and, as I have ridden far and fast, a cup of wine will not be unacceptable.'

So saying, he led his lovely wife into the next apartment, where Varney and Foster received them with the deepest reverences, which the first paid after the fashion of the court, and the second after that of the congregation. The earl returned their salutation with the negligent courtesy of one long used to such homage, while the countess repaid it with a punctilious solicitude which showed it was not quite so familiar to her.

The banquet at which the company seated themselves corresponded in magnificence with the splendour of the apartment in which it was served up, but no domestic gave his attendance. Janet alone stood ready to wait upon the company, and, indeed, the board was so well supplied with all that could be desired that little or no assistance was necessary. The earl and his lady occupied the upper end of the table, and Varney and Foster sat beneath the salt, as was the custom with inferiors. The latter, overawed perhaps by society to which he was altogether unused, did not utter a single syllable during the repast, while Varney, with great tact and discernment, sustained just as much of the conversation as, without the appearance of intrusion on his part, prevented it from languishing, and maintained the good humour of the earl at the highest pitch. This man was indeed highly qualified by nature to discharge the part in which he found himself placed, being discreet and cautious on the one hand, and on the other quick, keen-witted, and imaginative, so that even the countess, prejudiced as she was against him on many accounts, felt and enjoyed his powers of conversation, and was more disposed than she had ever hitherto found herself to join in the praises which the earl lavished on his favourite. The hour of rest at length arrived, the earl and countess retired to their apartment, and all was silent in the castle for the rest of the night.

Early on the ensuing morning, Varney acted as the earl's chamberlain as well as his master of horse, though the latter was his proper office in that magnificent household, where knights and gentlemen of good descent were well contented to hold such menial situations as nobles themselves held in that of the sovereign. The duties of each of these charges were familiar to Varney, who, sprung from an ancient but decayed family, was the earl's page during his earlier and more obscure

fortunes, and, faithful to him in adversity, had afterwards contrived to render himself no less useful to him in his rapid and splendid advance to fortune, thus establishing in him an interest resting both on present and past services, which rendered him an almost indispensable share of his confidence.

'Help me to do on a plainer riding-suit, Varney,' said the earl, as he laid aside his morning-gown, flowered with silk and lined with sables, 'and put these chains and fetters there (pointing to the collars of the various orders which lay on the table) into their place of security, my neck last night was wellnigh broke with the weight of them. I am half of the mind that they shall gall me no more. They are bonds which knaves have invented to fetter fools. How think'st thou, Varney?'

'Faith, my good lord,' said his attendant, 'I think fetters of gold are like no other fetters. They are ever the weightier the welcomer.'

'For all that, Varney,' replied his master, 'I am wellnigh resolved they shall bind me to the court no longer. What can further service and higher favour give me, beyond the high rank and large estate which I have already secured? What brought my father to the block, but that he could not bound his wishes within right and reason? I have, you know, had mine own ventures and mine own escapes, I am wellnigh resolved to tempt the sea no farther, but sit me down in quiet on the shore.'

'And gather cockle-shells, with Dan Cupid to aid you,' said Varney.

'How mean you by that, Varney?' said the earl, somewhat hastily.

'Nay, my lord,' said Varney, 'be not angry with me. If your lordship is happy in a lady so rarely lovely that, in order to enjoy her company with somewhat more freedom, you are willing to part with all you have hitherto lived for, some of your poor servants may be sufferers, but your bounty hath placed me so high, that I shall ever have enough to maintain a poor gentleman in the rank befitting the high office he has held in your lordship's family.'

'Yet you seem discontented when I propose throwing up a dangerous game, which may end in the ruin of both of us.'

'I, my lord!' said Varney, 'surely I have no cause to regret your lordship's retreat. It will not be Richard Varney who will incur the displeasure of majesty, and the ridicule of the

court, when the stateliest fabric that ever was founded upon a prince's favour melts away like a morning frost-work. I would only have you yourself be assured, my lord, ere you take a step which cannot be retracted, that you consult your fame and happiness in the course you propose.'

'Speak on, then, Varney,' said the earl, 'I tell thee I have determined nothing, and will weigh all considerations on either side.'

'Well, then, my lord,' replied Varney, 'we will suppose the step taken, the frown frowned, the laugh laughed, and the moan moaned. You have retired, we will say, to some one of your most distant castles, so far from court that you hear neither the sorrow of your friends nor the glee of your enemies. We will suppose, too, that your successful rival will be satisfied — a thing greatly to be doubted — with abridging and cutting away the branches of the great tree which so long kept the sun from him, and that he does not insist upon tearing you up by the roots. Well, the late prime favourite of England, who wielded her general's staff and controlled her parliaments, is now a rural baron, hunting, hawking, drinking fat ale with country esquires, and mustering his men at the command of the high sheriff —'

'Varney, forbear!' said the earl.

'Nay, my lord, you must give me leave to conclude my picture. Sussex governs England, the Queen's health fails, the succession is to be settled — a road is opened to ambition more splendid than ambition ever dreamed of. You hear all this as you sit by the hob, under the shade of your hall chimney. You then begin to think what hopes you have fallen from, and what insignificance you have embraced, and all that you might look babies in the eyes of your fair wife oftener than once a fortnight.'

'I say, Varney,' said the earl, 'no more of this. I said not that the step, which my own ease and comfort would urge me to, was to be taken hastily, or without due consideration to the public safety. Bear witness to me, Varney, I subdue my wishes of retirement, not because I am moved by the call of private ambition, but that I may preserve the position in which I may best serve my country at the hour of need. Order our horses presently. I will wear, as formerly, one of the livery cloaks, and ride before the portmantle. Thou shalt be master for the day, Varney, neglect nothing that can blind suspicion. We will to horse ere men are stirring. I will but take leave of my lady, and be ready. I impose a restraint on my own poor heart,

and wound one yet more dear to me, but the patriot must subdue the husband'

Having said this in a melancholy but firm accent, he left the dressing-apartment

'I am glad thou art gone,' thought Varney, 'or, practised as I am in the follies of mankind, I had laughed in the very face of thee!' Thou mayest tire as thou wilt of thy new bauble, thy pretty piece of painted Eve's flesh there, I will not be thy hindrance. But of thine old bauble, ambition, thou shalt not tire, for as you climb the hill, my lord, you must drag Richard Varney up with you, and if he can urge you to the ascent he means to profit by, believe me he will spare neither whip nor spur. And for you, my pretty lady, that would be countess outright, you were best not thwart my courses, lest you are called to an old reckoning on a new score. "Thou shalt be master," did he say? By my faith, he may find that he spoke truer than he is aware of. And thus he, who, in the estimation of so many wise-judging men, can match Burleigh and Walsingham in policy, and Sussex in war, becomes pupil to his own menial, and all for a hazel eye and a little cunning red and white, and so falls ambition. And yet, if the charms of mortal woman could excuse a man's politic pate for becoming bewildered, my lord had the excuse at his right hand on this blessed evening that has last passed over us. Well, let things happy, and for that softer piece of creation, if she speak not out her interview with Tressilian, as well I think she dare not, she also must traffic with me for concealment and mutual support in spite of all this scorn. I must to the stables. Well, my lord, I order your retinue now, the time may soon come that *my* master of the horse shall order mine own. What was Thomas Cromwell but a smith's son, and he died "my lord" — on a scaffold, doubtless, but that, too, was in character. And what was Ralph Sadler but the clerk of Cromwell, and he has gazed eighteen fair lordships, — *via!* I know my steerage as well as they.'

So saying, he left the apartment

In the meanwhile the earl had re-entered the bedchamber, bent on taking a hasty farewell of the lovely countess, and scarce daring to trust himself in private with her, to hear requests again urged which he found it difficult to parry, yet which his recent conversation with his master of horse had determined him not to grant

He found her in a white cymar of silk lined with furs, her

little feet unstockinged and hastily thrust into slippers, her unbraided hair escaping from under her midnight coif — with little array but her own loveliness, rather augmented than diminished by the grief which she felt at the approaching moment of separation

‘Now, God be with thee, my dearest and loveliest!’ said the earl, scarce tearing himself from her embrace, yet again returning to fold her again and again in his arms, and again bidding farewell, and again returning to kiss and bid adieu once more ‘The sun is on the verge of the blue horizon — I dare not stay Ere this I should have been ten miles from hence’

Such were the words with which at length he strove to cut short their parting interview

‘You will not grant my request, then?’ said the countess ‘Ah, false knight! did ever lady, with bare foot in slipper, seek boon of a brave knight, yet return with denial?’

‘Anything, Amy — anything thou canst ask I will grant,’ answered the earl, ‘always excepting,’ he said, ‘that which might ruin us both’

‘Nay,’ said the countess, ‘I urge not my wish to be acknowledged in the character which would make me the envy of England — as the wife, that is, of my brave and noble lord, the first as the most fondly beloved of English nobles Let me but share the secret with my dear father! Let me but end his misery on my unworthy account, they say he is ill, the good old kind hearted man!’

‘*They* say?’ asked the earl, hastily, ‘who says? Did not Varney convey to Sir Hugh all we dare at present tell him concerning your happiness and welfare? And has he not told you that the good old knight was following, with good heart and health, his favourite and wonted exercise? Who has dared put other thoughts into your head?’

‘Oh, no one, my lord — no one,’ said the countess, something alarmed at the tone in which the question was put, ‘but yet, my lord, I would fain be assured by mine own eyesight that my father is well.’

‘Be contented, Amy, thou canst not now have communication with thy father or his house. Were it not a deep course of policy to commit no secret unnecessarily to the custody of more than must needs be, it were sufficient reason for secrecy that yonder Cornishman — yonder Trevanion, or Tressilian, or whatever his name is — haunts the old knight’s house, and must necessarily know whatever is communicated there.’

'My lord,' answered the countess, 'I do not think it so. My father has been long noted a worthy and honourable man; and for Tressilian, if we can pardon ourselves the ill we have wrought him, I will wager the coronet I am to share with you one day that he is incapable of returning injury for injury.'

'I will not trust him, however, Amy,' said her husband — 'by my honour, I will not trust him. I would rather the foul fiend intermingle in our secret than this Tressilian!'

'And why, my lord?' said the countess, though she shuddered slightly at the tone of determination in which he spoke, 'let me but know why you think thus hardly of Tressilian?'

'Madam,' replied the earl, 'my will ought to be a sufficient reason. If you desire more, consider how this Tressilian is leagued, and with whom. He stands high in the opinion of this Ratcliffe, this Sussex, against whom I am barely able to maintain my ground in the opinion of our suspicious mistress, and if he had me at such advantage, Amy, as to become acquainted with the tale of our marriage before Elizabeth were fitly prepared, I were an outcast from her grace for ever — a bankrupt at once in favour and in fortune, perhaps, for she hath in her a touch of her father Henry — a victim, and it may be a bloody one, to her offended and jealous resentment.'

'But why, my lord,' again urged his lady, 'should you deem thus injuriously of a man of whom you know so little? What you do know of Tressilian is through me, and it is I who assure you that in no circumstances will he betray your secret. If I did him wrong in your behalf, my lord, I am now the more concerned you should do him justice. You are offended at my speaking of him, what would you say had I actually myself seen him?'

'If you had,' replied the earl, 'you would do well to keep that interview as secret as that which is spoken in a confessional. I seek no one's ruin, but he who thrusts himself on my secret privacy were better look well to his future walk. The bear¹ brooks no one to cross his awful path.'

'Awful, indeed!' said the countess, turning very pale.

'You are ill, my love,' said the earl, supporting her in his arms; 'stretch yourself on your couch again, it is but an early day for you to leave it. Have you aught else, involving less than my fame, my fortune, and my life, to ask of me?'

'Nothing, my lord and love,' answered the countess, faintly,

¹ The Leicester cognizance was the ancient device adopted by his father, when Earl of Warwick, the bear and ragged staff.

'something there was that I would have told you, but your anger has driven it from my recollection'

'Reserve it till our next meeting, my love,' said the earl fondly, and again embracing her, 'and barring only those requests which I cannot and dare not grant, thy wish must be more than England and all its dependencies can fulfil if it is not gratified to the letter'

Thus saying, he at length took farewell. At the bottom of the staircase he received from Varney an ample livery cloak and slouched hat, in which he wrapped himself so as to disguise his person and completely conceal his features. Horses were ready in the courtyard for himself and Varney, for one or two of his train, entrusted with the secret so far as to know or guess that the earl intrigued with a beautiful lady at that mansion, though her name and quality were unknown to them, had already been dismissed over night.

Anthony Foster himself had in hand the rein of the earl's palfrey, a stout and able nag for the road, while his old serving-man held the bridle of the more showy and gallant steed which Richard Varney was to occupy in the character of master.

As the earl approached, however, Varney advanced to hold his master's bridle, and to prevent Foster from paying that duty to the earl which he probably considered as belonging to his own office. Foster scowled at an interference which seemed intended to prevent his paying his court to his patron, but gave place to Varney, and the earl, mounting without farther observation, and forgetting that his assumed character of a domestic threw him into the rear of his supposed master, rode pensively out of the quadrangle, not without waving his hand repeatedly in answer to the signals which were made by the countess with her kerchief from the windows of her apartment.

While his stately form vanished under the dark archway which led out of the quadrangle, Varney muttered, 'There goes fine policy—the servant before the master!' then, as he disappeared, seized the moment to speak a word with Foster. 'Thou look'st dark on me, Anthony,' he said, 'as if I had deprived thee of a parting nod of my lord, but I have moved him to leave thee a better remembrance for thy faithful service. See here! a purse of as good gold as ever chinked under a miser's thumb and forefinger. Ay, count them, lad,' said he, as Foster received the gold with a grim smile, 'and add to them the goodly remembrance he gave last night to Janet.'

'How's this' — how's this!' said Anthony Foster, hastily; 'gave he gold to Janet?'

'Ay, man, wherefore not? does not her service to his fair lady require guerdon?'

'She shall have none on't,' said Foster. 'she shall return it. I know his dotage on one face is as brief as it is deep. His affections are as fickle as the moon.'

'Why, Foster, thou art mad, thou dost not hope for such good fortune as that my lord should cast an eye on Janet? Who, in the fiend's name, would listen to the thrush when the nightingale is singing?'

'Thrush or nightingale, all is one to the fowler, and, Master Varney, you can sound the quail-pipe most daintily to wile wantons into his nets. I desire no such devil's preferment for Janet as you have brought many a poor maiden to. Dost thou laugh? I will keep one limb of my family, at least, from Satan's clutches, that thou mayest rely on. She shall restore the gold.'

'Ay, or give it to thy keeping, Tony, which will serve as well,' answered Varney, 'but I have that to say which is more serious. Our lord is returning to court in an evil humour for us.'

'How meanest thou?' said Foster. 'Is he tired already of his pretty toy — his plaything yonder? He has purchased her at a monarch's ransom, and I warrant me he rues his bargain.'

'Not a whit, Tony,' answered the master of the horse, 'he dotes on her, and will forsake the court for her, then down go hopes, possessions, and safety. church lands are resumed, Tony, and well if the holders be not called to account in Exchequer.'

'That were ruin,' said Foster, his brow darkening with apprehensions, 'and all this for a woman! Had it been for his soul's sake, it were something, and I sometimes wish I myself could fling away the world that cleaves to me, and be as one of the poorest of our church.'

'Thou art like enough to be so, Tony,' answered Varney, 'but I think the devil will give thee little credit for thy compelled poverty, and so thou lovest on all hands. But follow my counsel, and Cumnor Place shall be thy copyhold yet. Say nothing of this Tressilian's visit — not a word until I give thee notice.'

'And wherefore, I pray you?' asked Foster, suspiciously.

'Dull beast!' replied Varney, 'in my lord's present humour it were the ready way to confirm him in his resolution of retirement, should he know that his lady was haunted with such a

spectre in his absence. He would be for playing the dragon himself over his golden fruit, and then, Tony, thy occupation is ended. A word to the wise. Farewell — I must follow him.'

He turned his horse, struck him with the spurs, and rode off under the archway in pursuit of his lord.

'Would thy occupation were ended, or thy neck broken, damned pander!' said Anthony Foster. 'But I must follow his beck, for his interest and mine are the same, and he can wind the proud earl to his will. Janet shall give me those pieces though, they shall be laid out in some way for God's service, and I will keep them separate in my strong chest till I can fall upon a fitting employment for them. No contagious vapour shall breathe on Janet: she shall remain pure as a blessed spirit, were it but to pray God for her father. I need her prayers, for I am at a hard pass. Strange reports are abroad concerning my way of life. The congregation look cold on me, and when Master Holdforth spoke of hypocrites being like a whited sepulchre, which within was full of dead men's bones, methought he looked full at me. The Romish was a comfortable faith, Lambourne spoke true in that. A man had but to follow his thrift by such ways as offered — tell his beads — hear a mass — confess, and be absolved. These Puritans tread a harder and a rougher path, but I will try — I will read my Bible for an hour ere I again open mine iron chest.'

Varney, meantime, spurred after his lord, whom he found waiting for him at the postern gate of the park.

'You waste time, Varney,' said the earl, 'and it presses. I must be at Woodstock before I can safely lay aside my disguise, and till then I journey in some peril.'

'It is but two hours' brisk riding, my lord,' said Varney, 'for me, I only stopped to enforce your commands of care and secrecy on yonder Foster, and to inquire about the abode of the gentleman whom I would promote to your lordship's train in the room of Trevors.'

'Is he fit for the meridian of the ante-chamber, think'st thou?' said the earl.

'He promises well, my lord,' replied Varney, 'but if your lordship were pleased to ride on, I could go back to Cumnor, and bring him to your lordship at Woodstock before you are out of bed.'

'Why, I am asleep there, thou knowest, at this moment,' said the earl, 'and I pray you not to spare horse-flesh, that you may be with me at my levee.'

So saying, he gave his horse the spur, and proceeded on his journey, while Varney rode back to Cumnor by the public road, avoiding the park. The latter alighted at the door of the bonny Black Bear, and desired to speak with Master Michael Lambourne. That respectable character was not long of appearing before his new patron, but it was with downcast looks

'Thou hast lost the scent,' said Varney, 'of thy comrade Tressilian. I know it by thy hang-dog visage. Is this thy alacrity, thou impudent knave?'

'Cog's wounds!' said Lambourne, 'there was never a trail so finely hunted. I saw him to earth at mine uncle's here — stuck to him like bee's-wax — saw him at supper — watched him to his chamber, and presto — he is gone next morning, the very hostler knows not where!'

'This sounds like practice upon me, sir,' replied Varney, 'and if it prove so, by my soul you shall repent it!'

'Sir, the best hound will be sometimes at fault,' answered Lambourne, 'how should it serve me that this fellow should have thus vanished? You may ask mine host, Giles Gosling — ask the tapster and hostler — ask Cicely, and the whole household, how I kept eyes on Tressilian while he was on foot. On my soul, I could not be expected to watch him like a sick-nurse, when I had seen him fairly a-bed in his chamber. That will be allowed me, surely.'

Varney did, in fact, make some inquiry among the household, which confirmed the truth of Lambourne's statement. Tressilian, it was unanimously agreed, had departed suddenly and unexpectedly, betwixt night and morning.

'But I will wrong no one,' said mine host, 'he left on the table in his lodging the full value of his reckoning, with some allowance to the servants of the house, which was the less necessary that he saddled his own gelding, as it seems, without the hostler's assistance.'

Thus satisfied of the rectitude of Lambourne's conduct, Varney began to talk to him upon his future prospects, and the mode in which he meant to bestow himself, intimating that he understood from Foster he was not disinclined to enter into the household of a nobleman.

'Have you,' said he, 'ever been at court?'

'No,' replied Lambourne, 'but ever since I was ten years old I have dreamt once a-week that I was there, and made my fortune.'

'It may be your own fault if your dream comes not true,' said Varney 'Are you needy?'

'Um!' replied Lambourne, 'I love pleasure.'

'That is a sufficient answer, and an honest one,' said Varney 'Know you ought of the requisites expected from the retainer of a rising courtier?'

'I have imagined them to myself, sir,' answered Lambourne, 'as, for example, a quick eye, a close mouth, a ready and bold hand, a sharp wit, and a blunt conscience'

'And thine, I suppose,' said Varney, 'has had its edge blunted long since?'

'I cannot remember, sir, that its edge was ever over keen,' replied Lambourne. 'When I was a youth, I had some few whimsies, but I rubbed them partly out of my recollection on the rough grindstone of the wars, and what remained I washed out in the broad waves of the Atlantic.'

'Thou hast served, then, in the Indies?'

'In both East and West,' answered the candidate for court service, 'by both sea and land, I have served both the Portugal and the Spaniard, both the Dutchman and the Frenchman, and have made war on our own account with a crew of jolly fellows who held there was no peace beyond the Line'¹

'Thou mayest do me, and my lord, and thyself, good service,' said Varney, after a pause 'But observe, I know the world, and answer me truly, canst thou be faithful?'

'Did you not know the world,' answered Lambourne, 'it were my duty to say "ay," without further circumstance, and to swear to it with life and honour, and so forth But as it seems to me that your worship is one who desires rather honest truth than politic falsehood, I reply to you that I can be faithful to the gallows' foot, ay, to the loop that dangles from it, if I am well used and well recompensed — not otherwise'

'To thy other virtues thou canst add, no doubt,' said Varney, in a jeering tone, 'the knack of seeming serious and religious, when the moment demands it?'

'It would cost me nothing,' said Lambourne, 'to say "yes," but to speak on the square I must needs say "no" If you want a hypocrite, you may take Anthony Foster, who, from his childhood, had some sort of phantom haunting him, which he called religion, though it was that sort of godliness which always ended in being great gain But I have no such knack of it.'

¹ Sir Francis Drake, Morgan and many a bold buccanier of those days were in fact, little better than pirates.

'Well,' replied Varney, 'if thou hast no hypocrisy, hast thou not a nag here in the stable?'

'Ay, sir,' said Lambourne, 'that shall take hedge and ditch with my lord duke's best hunters. When I made a little mistake on Shooter's Hill, and stopped an ancient grazier whose pouches were better lined than his brain-pan, the bonny bay nag carried me sheer off, in spite of the whole hue and cry.'

'Saddle him then, instantly, and attend me,' said Varney. 'Leave thy clothes and baggage under charge of mine host, and I will conduct thee to a service in which, if thou do not better thyself, the fault shall not be fortune's, but thine own.'

'Brave and hearty!' said Lambourne, 'and I am mounted in an instant. Knave, hostler, saddle my nag without the loss of one instant, as thou dost value the safety of thy noddle. Pretty Cicely, take half this purse to comfort thee for my sudden departure.'

'Gogsnows!' replied the father, 'Cicely wants no such token from thee. Go away, Mike, and gather grace if thou canst, though I think thou goest not to the land where it grows.'

'Let me look at this Cicely of thine, mine host,' said Varney, 'I have heard much talk of her beauty.'

'It is a sunburnt beauty,' said mine host, 'well qualified to stand out rain and wind, but little calculated to please such critical gallants as yourself. She keeps her chamber, and cannot encounter the glance of such sunny-day courtiers as my noble guest.'

'Well, peace be with her, my good host,' answered Varney, 'our horses are impatient, we bid you good day.'

'Does my nephew go with you, so please you?' said Gosling.

'Ay, such is his purpose,' answered Richard Varney.

'You are right — fully right,' replied mine host — 'you are, I say, fully right, my kinsman. Thou hast got a gay horse, see thou light not unaware upon a halter, or, if thou wilt needs be made immortal by means of a rope, which thy purpose of following this gentleman renders not unlikely, I charge thee to find a gallows as far from Cumnor as thou conveniently mayest, and so I commend you to your saddle.'

The master of the horse and his new retainer mounted accordingly, leaving the landlord to conclude his ill-omened farewell to himself and at leisure, and set off together at a rapid pace, which prevented conversation until the ascent of a steep sandy hill permitted them to resume it.

'You are contented, then,' said Varney to his companion, 'to take court service?'

'Ay, worshipful sir, if you like my terms as well as I like yours.'

'And what are your terms?' demanded Varney

'If I am to have a quick eye for my patron's interest, he must have a dull one towards my faults,' said Lambourne.

'Ay,' said Varney, 'so they lie not so grossly open that he must needs break his shins over them.'

'Agreed,' said Lambourne 'Next, if I run down game, I must have the picking of the bones.'

'That is but reason,' replied Varney, 'so that your betters are served before you.'

'Good,' said Lambourne, 'and it only remains to be said, that if the law and I quarrel, my patron must bear me out, for that is a chief point.'

'Reason again,' said Varney, 'if the quarrel hath happened in your master's service.'

'For the wage and so forth, I say nothing,' proceeded Lambourne, 'it is the secret guerdon that I must live by.'

'Never fear,' said Varney, 'thou shalt have clothes and spending money to ruffle it with the best of thy degree, for thou goest to a household where you have gold, as they say, by the eye.'

'That jumps all with my humour,' replied Michael Lambourne, 'and it only remains that you tell me my master's name.'

'My name is Master Richard Varney,' answered his companion

'But I mean,' said Lambourne, 'the name of the noble lord to whose service you are to prefer me.'

'How, knave, art thou too good to call *me* master?' said Varney, hastily, 'I would have thee bold to others, but not saucy to me.'

'I crave your worship's pardon,' said Lambourne, 'but you seemed familiar with Anthony Foster, now I am familiar with Anthony myself.'

'Thou art a shrewd knave, I see,' replied Varney 'Mark me—I do indeed propose to introduce thee into a nobleman's household, but it is upon my person thou wilt chiefly wait, and upon my countenance that thou wilt depend. I am his master of horse. Thou wilt soon know his name, it is one that shakes the council and wields the state.'

'By this light, a brave spell to conjure with,' said Lambourne, 'if a man would discover hidden treasures!'

'Used with discretion, it may prove so, replied Varney; 'but mark — if thou conjure with it at thine own hand, it may raise a devil who will tear thee in fragments.'

'Enough said,' replied Lambourne, 'I will not exceed my limits.'

The travellers then resumed the rapid rate of travelling which their discourse had interrupted, and soon arrived at the royal park of Woodstock. This ancient possession of the crown of England was then very different from what it had been when it was the residence of the fair Rosamond, and the scene of Henry the Second's secret and illicit amours — and yet more unlike to the scene which it exhibits in the present day, when Blenheim House commemorates the victory of Marlborough, and no less the genius of Vanburgh, though decried in his own time by persons of taste far inferior to his own. It was, in Elizabeth's time, an ancient mansion in bad repair, which had long ceased to be honoured with the royal residence, to the great impoverishment of the adjacent village. The inhabitants, however, had made several petitions to the Queen to have the favour of the sovereign's countenance occasionally bestowed upon them, and upon this very business, ostensibly at least, was the noble lord whom we have already introduced to our readers a visitor at Woodstock.

Varney and Lambourne galloped without ceremony into the courtyard of the ancient and dilapidated mansion, which presented on that morning a scene of bustle which it had not exhibited for two reigns. Officers of the earl's household, livery-men and retainers, went and came with all the insolent fracas which attaches to their profession. The neigh of horses and the baying of hounds were heard, for my lord, in his occupation of inspecting and surveying the manor and demesne, was of course provided with the means of following his pleasure in the chase or park, said to have been the earliest that was inclosed in England, and which was well stocked with deer that had long roamed there unmolested. Several of the inhabitants of the village, in anxious hope of a favourable result from this unwonted visit, loitered about the courtyard, and awaited the great man's coming forth. Their attention was excited by the hasty arrival of Varney, and a murmur ran amongst them, 'The earl's master of the horse!' while they hurried to bespeak favour by hastily unbonneting and proffer-

ing to hold the bridle and stirrup of the favoured retainer and his attendant.

'Stand somewhat aloof, my masters!' said Varney, haughtily, 'and let the domestics do their office'

The mortified citizens and peasants fell back at the signal, while Lambourne, who had his eye upon his superior's deportment, repelled the services of those who offered to assist him with yet more discourtesy — 'Stand back, Jack peasant, with a murrain to you, and let these knave footmen do their duty!'

While they gave their nags to the attendants of the household, and walked into the mansion with an air of superiority which long practice and consciousness of birth rendered natural to Varney, and which Lambourne endeavoured to imitate as well as he could, the poor inhabitants of Woodstock whispered to each other, 'Well-a day — God save us from all such misproud princexes! An the master be like the men, why, the fiend may take all, and yet have no more than his due.'

'Silence, good neighbours!' said the bailiff, 'keep tongue betwixt teeth, we shall know more by and by. But never will a lord come to Woodstock so welcome as bluff old King Harry! He would horsewhip a fellow one day with his own royal hand, and then fling him an handful of silver groats, with his own broad face on them, to 'noint the sore withal.'

'Ay, rest be with him!' echoed the auditors, 'it will be long ere this Lady Elizabeth horsewhip any of us'

'There is no saying,' answered the bailiff 'Meanwhile, patience, good neighbours, and let us comfort ourselves by thinking that we deserve such notice at her Grace's hands.'

Meanwhile, Varney, closely followed by his new dependant, made his way to the hall, where men of more note and consequence than those left in the courtyard awaited the appearance of the earl, who as yet kept his chamber. All paid court to Varney, with more or less deference, as suited their own rank, or the urgency of the business which brought them to his lord's levee. To the general question of, 'When comes my lord forth, Master Varney?' he gave brief answers, as, 'See you not my boots? I am just returned from Oxford, and know nothing of it,' and the like, until the same query was put in a higher tone by a personage of more importance. 'I will inquire of the chamberlain, Sir Thomas Copely,' was the reply. The chamberlain, distinguished by his silver key, answered, that the earl only awaited Master Varney's return to come down, but that he would first speak with him in his private chamber

Varney, therefore, bowed to the company, and took leave, to enter his lord's apartment

There was a murmur of expectation which lasted a few minutes, and was at length hushed by the opening of the folding-doors at the upper end of the apartment, through which the earl made his entrance, marshalled by his chamberlain and the steward of his family, and followed by Richard Varney. In his noble mien and princely features men read nothing of that insolence which was practised by his dependants. His courtesies were, indeed, measured by the rank of those to whom they were addressed, but even the meanest person present had a share of his gracious notice. The inquiries which he made respecting the condition of the manor, of the Queen's rights there, and of the advantages and disadvantages which might attend her occasional residence at the royal seat of Woodstock, seemed to show that he had most earnestly investigated the matter of the petition of the inhabitants, and with a desire to forward the interest of the place

'Now the Lord love his noble countenance,' said the bailiff, who had thrust himself into the presence-chamber, 'he looks somewhat pale. I warrant him he hath spent the whole night in perusing our memorial. Master Toughyarn, who took six months to draw it up, said it would take a week to understand it, and see if the earl hath not knocked the marrow out of it in twenty-four hours!'

The earl then acquainted them that he should move their sovereign to honour Woodstock occasionally with her residence during her royal progresses, that the town and its vicinity might derive from her countenance and favour the same advantages as from those of her predecessors. Meanwhile, he rejoiced to be the expounder of her gracious pleasure, in assuring them that, for the increase of trade and encouragement of the worthy burgesses of Woodstock, her Majesty was minded to erect the town into a staple for wool.

This joyful intelligence was received with the acclamations not only of the better sort who were admitted to the audience-chamber, but of the commons who awaited without.

The freedom of the corporation was presented to the earl upon knee by the magistrates of the place, together with a purse of gold pieces, which the earl handed to Varney, who, on his part, gave a share to Lambourne, as the most acceptable earnest of his new service.

The earl and his retinue took horse soon after to return to

court, accompanied by the shouts of the inhabitants of Woodstock, who made the old oaks ring with re-echoing, 'Long live Queen Elizabeth and the noble Earl of Leicester!' The urbanity and courtesy of the earl even threw a gleam of popularity over his attendants, as their haughty deportment had formerly obscured that of their master, and men shouted, 'Long life to the earl and to his gallant followers!' as Varney and Lambourne, each in his rank, rode proudly through the streets of Woodstock.

CHAPTER VIII

Host I will hear you, Master Fenton,
And I will, at least, keep your counsel

Merry Wives of Windsor

IT becomes necessary to return to the detail of those circumstances which accompanied, and indeed occasioned, the sudden disappearance of Tressilian from the sign of the Black Bear at Cumnoi. It will be recollected that this gentleman, after his rencounter with Varney, had returned to Giles Gosling's caravansary, where he shut himself up in his own chamber, demanded pen, ink, and paper, and announced his purpose to remain private for the day. In the evening he appeared again in the public room, where Michael Lambourne, who had been on the watch for him, agreeably to his engagement to Varney, endeavoured to renew his acquaintance with him, and hoped he retained no unfriendly recollection of the part he had taken in the morning's scuffle.

But Tressilian repelled his advances firmly, though with civility. 'Master Lambourne,' said he, 'I trust I have recompensed to your pleasure the time you have wasted on me. Under the show of wild bluntness which you exhibit, I know you have sense enough to understand me when I say frankly, that the object of our temporary acquaintance having been accomplished, we must be strangers to each other in future.'

'*Voto!*' said Lambourne, twirling his whiskers with one hand, and grasping the hilt of his weapon with the other, 'if I thought that this usage was meant to insult me——'

'You would bear it with discretion, doubtless,' interrupted Tressilian, 'as you must do at any rate. You know too well the distance that is betwixt us to require me to explain myself farther. Good evening.'

So saying, he turned his back upon his former companion, and entered into discourse with the landlord. Michael Lambourne felt strongly disposed to bully, but his wrath died away

in a few incoherent oaths and ejaculations, and he sank unresistingly under the ascendancy which superior spirits possess over persons of his habits and description. He remained moody and silent in a corner of the apartment, paying the most marked attention to every motion of his late companion, against whom he began now to nourish a quarrel on his own account, which he trusted to avenge by the execution of his new master Varney's directions. The hour of supper arrived, and was followed by that of repose, when Tressilian, like others, retired to his sleeping-apartment.

He had not been in bed long, when the train of sad reveries, which supplied the place of rest in his disturbed mind, was suddenly interrupted by the jar of a door on its hinges, and a light was seen to glimmer in the apartment. Tressilian, who was as brave as steel, sprang from his bed at this alarm, and had laid hand upon his sword, when he was prevented from drawing it by a voice which said, 'Be not too rash with your rapier, Master Tressilian. It is I, your host, Giles Gosling.'

At the same time, unshrouding the dark lantern, which had hitherto only emitted an indistinct glimmer, the goodly aspect and figure of the landlord of the Black Bear was visibly presented to his astonished guest.

'What mummery is this, mine host?' said Tressilian. 'Have you supped as jollily as last night, and so mistaken your chamber? or is midnight a time for masquerading it in your guest's lodging?'

'Master Tressilian,' replied mine host, 'I know my place and my time as well as e'er a merry landlord in England. But here has been my hang dog kinsman watching you as close as ever cat watched a mouse, and here have you, on the other hand, quarrelled and fought, either with him or with some other person, and I fear that danger will come of it.'

'Go to, thou art but a fool, man,' said Tressilian, 'thy kinsman is beneath my resentment, and, besides, why shouldst thou think I had quarrelled with any one whomsoever?'

'Oh! sir,' replied the innkeeper, 'there was a red spot on thy very cheek-bone, which boded of a late brawl, as sure as the conjunction of Mars and Saturn threatens misfortune, and when you returned, the buckles of your girdle were brought forward, and your step was quick and hasty, and all things showed your hand and your hilt had been lately acquainted.'

'Well, good mine host, if I have been obliged to draw my sword,' said Tressilian, 'why should such a circumstance fetch

thee out of thy warm bed at this time of night? Thou seest the mischief is all over'

'Under favour, that is what I doubt Anthony Foster is a dangerous man, defended by strong court patronage, which hath borne him out in matters of very deep concernment. And then my kinsman — why, I have told you what he is, and if these two old cronies have made up their old acquaintance, I would not, my worshipful guest, that it should be at thy cost. I promise you, Mike Lambourne has been making very particular inquiries at mine hostler, when and which way you ride. Now, I would have you think, whether you may not have done or said something for which you may be waylaid and taken at disadvantage'

'Thou art an honest man, mine host,' said Tressilian, after a moment's consideration, 'and I will deal frankly with thee. If these men's malice is directed against me — as I deny not but it may — it is because they are the agents of a more powerful villain than themselves'

'You mean Master Richard Varney, do you not?' said the landlord, 'he was at Cumnor Place yesterday, and came not thither so private but what he was espied by one who told me'

'I mean the same, mine host'

'Then, for God's sake, worshipful Master Tressilian,' said honest Gosling, 'look well to yourself. This Varney is the protector and patron of Anthony Foster, who holds under him, and by his favour, some lease of yonder mansion and the park. Varney got a large grant of the lands of the abbacy of Abingdon, and Cumnor Place amongst others, from his master, the Earl of Leicester. Men say he can do everything with him, though I hold the earl too good a nobleman to employ him as some men talk of. And then the earl can do anything — that is, anything right or fitting — with the Queen, God bless her! so you see what an enemy you have made to yourself'

'Well, it is done, and I cannot help it,' answered Tressilian.

'Uds precious, but it must be helped in some manner,' said the host. 'Richard Varney — why, what between his influence with my lord, and his pretending to so many old and vexatious claims in right of the abbot here, men fear almost to mention his name, much more to set themselves against his practices. You may judge by our discourses the last night. Men said their pleasure of Tony Foster, but not a word of Richard Varney, though all men judge him to be at the bottom of yonder mystery about the pretty wench. But perhaps you

know more of that matter than I do, for women, though they wear not swords, are occasion for many a blade's exchanging a sheath of neat's leather for one of flesh and blood.'

'I do indeed know more of that poor unfortunate lady than thou dost, my friendly host, and so bankrupt am I, at this moment, of friends and advice, that I will willingly make a counsellor of thee, and tell thee the whole history, the rather that I have a favour to ask when my tale is ended.'

'Good Master Tressilian,' said the landlord, 'I am but a poor innkeeper, little able to adjust or counsel such a guest as yourself. But as sure as I have risen decently above the world by giving good measure and reasonable charges, I am an honest man, and as such, if I may not be able to assist you, I am, at least, not capable to abuse your confidence. Say away, therefore, as confidently as if you spoke to your father, and thus far at least be certain, that my curiosity, for I will not deny that which belongs to my calling, is joined to a reasonable degree of discretion.'

'I doubt it not, mine host,' answered Tressilian, and while his auditor remained in anxious expectation, he meditated for an instant how he should commence his narrative. 'My tale,' he at length said, 'to be quite intelligible, must begin at some distance back. You have heard of the battle of Stoke, my good host, and perhaps of old Sir Roger Robsart, who, in that battle, valiantly took part with Henry VII, the Queen's grandfather, and routed the Earl of Lincoln, Lord Geraldin and his wild Irish, and the Flemings whom the Duchess of Burgundy had sent over, in the quarrel of Lambert Simnel?'

'I remember both one and the other,' said Giles Goshing, 'it is sung of a dozen times a-week on my ale-bench below Sir Roger Robsart of Devon — Oh, ay, 't is him of whom minstrels sing to this hour —

He was the flower of Stoke's red field,
When Martin Swart on ground lay slain,
In raging rout he never reel'd,
But like a rock did firm remain ¹

Ay, and then there was Martin Swart I have heard my grandfather talk of, and of the jolly Almaines whom he commanded, with their slashed doublets and quaint hose, all frounced with ribbons above the nether stocks. Here's a song goes of Martin Swart, too, an I had but memory for it

¹ This verse or something similar occurs in a long ballad or poem on Flodden Field reprinted by the late Henry Weber

Martin Swart and his men,
Saddle them, saddle them,
Martin Swart and his men,
Saddle them well '1

'True, good mine host — the day was long talked of; but, if you sing so loud, you will awake more listeners than I care to commit my confidence unto'

'I crave pardon, my worshipful guest,' said mine host, 'I was oblivious. When an old song comes across us merry old knights of the spigot, it runs away with our discretion'

'Well, mine host, my grandfather, like some other Cornishmen, kept a warm affection to the house of York, and espoused the quarrel of this Simnel, assuming the title of Earl of Warwick, as the county afterwards, in great numbers, countenanced the cause of Perkin Warbeck, calling himself the Duke of York. My grandsire joined Simnel's standard, and was taken fighting desperately at Stoke, where most of the leaders of that unhappy army were slain in their harness. The good knight to whom he rendered himself, Sir Roger Robsart, protected him from the immediate vengeance of the king, and dismissed him without ransom. But he was unable to guard him from other penalties of his rashness, being the heavy fines by which he was impoverished, according to Henry's mode of weakening his enemies. The good knight did what he might to mitigate the distresses of my ancestor, and their friendship became so strict that my father was bred up as the sworn brother and intimate of the present Sir Hugh Robsart, the only son of Sir Roger, and the heir of his honest, and generous, and hospitable temper, though not equal to him in martial achievements'

'I have heard of good Sir Hugh Robsart,' interrupted the host, 'many a time and oft. His huntsman and sworn servant, Will Badger, hath spoken of him an hundred times in this very house — a jovial knight he is, and hath loved hospitality and open housekeeping more than the present fashion, which lays as much gold lace on the seams of a doublet as would feed a dozen of tall fellows with beef and ale for a twelvemonth, and let them have their evening at the alehouse once a-week, to do good to the publican'

'If you have seen Will Badger, mine host,' said Tressilian, 'you have heard enough of Sir Hugh Robsart, and therefore I will but say, that the hospitality you boast of hath proved somewhat detrimental to the estate of his family, which is per-

¹ See Martin Swart. Note 3

haps of the less consequence, as he has but one daughter to whom to bequeath it. And here begins my share in the tale. Upon my father's death, now several years since, the good Sir Hugh would willingly have made me his constant companion. There was a time, however, at which I felt the kind knight's excessive love for field sports detained me from studies by which I might have profited more, but I ceased to regret the leisure which gratitude and hereditary friendship compelled me to bestow on these rural avocations. The exquisite beauty of Mistress Amy Robsart, as she grew up from childhood to woman, could not escape one whom circumstances obliged to be so constantly in her company. I loved her, in short, mine host, and her father saw it.'

'And crossed your true loves, no doubt?' said mine host. 'It is the way in all such cases, and I judge it must have been so in your instance, from the heavy sigh you uttered even now.'

'The case was different, mine host. My suit was highly approved by the generous Sir Hugh Robsart, it was his daughter who was cold to my passion.'

'She was the more dangerous enemy of the two,' said the innkeeper. 'I fear your suit proved a cold one.'

'She yielded me her esteem,' said Tressilian, 'and seemed not unwilling that I should hope it might ripen into a warmer passion. There was a contract of future marriage executed betwixt us, upon her father's intercession, but, to comply with her anxious request, the execution was deferred for a twelve-month. During this period, Richard Varney appeared in the country, and, availing himself of some distant family connexion with Sir Hugh Robsart, spent much of his time in his company, until, at length, he almost lived in the family.'

'That could bode no good to the place he honoured with his residence,' said Goshing.

'No, by the rood!' replied Tressilian. 'Misunderstanding and misery followed his presence, yet so strangely, that I am at this moment at a loss to trace the gradations of their encroachment upon a family which had, till then, been so happy. For a time Amy Robsart received the attentions of this man Varney with the indifference attached to common courtesies, then followed a period in which she seemed to regard him with dislike, and even with disgust, and then an extraordinary species of connexion appeared to grow up betwixt them. Varney dropped those airs of pretension and gallantry which had marked his former approaches, and Amy, on the other hand,

seemed to renounce the ill-disguised disgust with which she had regarded them. They seemed to have more of privacy and confidence together than I fully liked, and I suspected that they met in private, where there was less restraint than in our presence. Many circumstances, which I noticed but little at the time — for I deemed her heart as open as her angelic countenance — have since arisen on my memory, to convince me of their private understanding. But I need not detail them — the fact speaks for itself. She vanished from her father's house — Varney disappeared at the same time — and this very day I have seen her in the character of his paramour, living in the house of his sordid dependant Foster, and visited by him, muffled, and by a secret entrance.

'And this, then, is the cause of your quarrel? Methinks, you should have been sure that the fair lady either desired or deserved your interference.'

'Mine host,' answered Tressilian, 'my father, such I must ever consider Sir Hugh Robsart, sits at home struggling with his grief, or, if so far recovered, vainly attempting to drown, in the practice of his field-sports, the recollection that he had once a daughter — a recollection which ever and anon breaks from him under circumstances the most pathetic. I could not brook the idea that he should live in misery and Amy in guilt, and I endeavoured to seek her out, with the hope of inducing her to return to her family. I have found her, and when I have either succeeded in my attempt or have found it altogether unavailing, it is my purpose to embark for the Virginia voyage.'

'Be not so rash, good sir,' replied Giles Gosling, 'and cast not yourself away because a woman — to be brief — is a woman, and changes her lovers like her suit of ribands, with no better reason than mere fantasy. And ere we probe this matter further, let me ask you what circumstances of suspicion directed you so truly to this lady's residence, or rather to her place of concealment?'

'The last is the better chosen word, mine host,' answered Tressilian, 'and touching your question, the knowledge that Varney held large grants of the demesnes formerly belonging to the monks of Abingdon directed me to this neighbourhood, and your nephew's visit to his old comrade Foster gave me the means of conviction on the subject.'

'And what is now your purpose, worthy sir? — excuse my freedom in asking the question so broadly.'

'I purpose, mine host,' said Tressilian, 'to renew my visit to the place of her residence to-morrow, and to seek a more detailed

communication with her than I have had to day. She must indeed be widely changed from what she once was if my words make no impression upon her.

‘Under your favour, Master Tressilian,’ said the landlord, ‘you can follow no such course. The lady, if I understand you, has already rejected your interference in the matter.’

‘It is but too true,’ said Tressilian, ‘I cannot deny it.’

‘Then, marry, by what right or interest do you process a compulsory interference with her inclination, disgraceful as it may be to herself and to her parents? Unless my judgment gulls me, those under whose protection she has thrown herself would have small hesitation to reject your interference, even if it were that of a father or brother, but as a discarded lover you expose yourself to be repelled with the strong hand, as well as with scorn. You can apply to no magistrate for aid or countenance, and you are hunting, therefore, a shadow in water, and will only — excuse my plainness — come by ducking and danger in attempting to catch it.’

‘I will appeal to the Earl of Leicester,’ said Tressilian, ‘against the infamy of his favourite. He courts the severe and strict sect of Puritans. He dare not, for the sake of his own character, refuse my appeal, even although he were destitute of the principles of honour and nobleness with which fame invests him. Or I will appeal to the Queen herself.’

‘Should Leicester,’ said the landlord, ‘be disposed to protect his dependant, as indeed he is said to be very confidential with Varney, the appeal to the Queen may bring them both to reason. Her Majesty is strict in such matters; and — if it be not treason to speak it — will rather, it is said, pardon a dozen courtiers for falling in love with herself than one for giving preference to another woman. Coragio then, my brave guest! for, if thou layest a petition from Sir Hugh at the foot of the throne, bucklered by the story of thine own wrongs, the favourite earl dared as soon leap into the Thames at the fullest and deepest as offer to protect Varney in a cause of this nature. But to do this with any chance of success you must go formally to work, and, without staying here to tilt with the master of horse to a privy-councillor, and expose yourself to the dagger of his camorades, you should hie you to Devonshire, get a petition drawn up for Sir Hugh Robsart, and make as many friends as you can to forward your interest at court.’

‘You have spoken well, mine host,’ said Tressilian, ‘and I will profit by your advice, and leave you to morrow early.’

'Nay, leave me to-night, sir, before to-morrow comes,' said the landlord. 'I never prayed for a guest's arrival more eagerly than I do to have you safely gone. My kinsman's destiny is most like to be hanged for something, but I would not that the cause were the murder of an honoured guest of mine. "Better ride safe in the dark," says the proverb, "than in daylight with a cut-throat at your elbow." Come, sir, I move you for your own safety. Your horse and all is ready, and here is your score.'

'It is somewhat under a noble,' said Tressilian, giving one to the host, 'give the balance to pretty Cicely, your daughter, and the servants of the house.'

'They shall taste of your bounty, sir,' said Gosling, 'and you should taste of my daughter's lips in grateful acknowledgment, but at this hour she cannot grace the porch to greet your departure.'

'Do not trust your daughter too far with your guests, my good landlord,' said Tressilian.

'Oh, sir, we will keep measure, but I wonder not that you are jealous of them all. May I crave to know with what aspect the fair lady at the Place yesterday received you?'

'I own,' said Tressilian, 'it was angry as well as confused, and affords me little hope that she is yet awakened from her unhappy delusion.'

'In that case, sir, I see not why you should play the champion of a wench that will none of you, and incur the resentment of a favourite's favourite, as dangerous a monster as ever a knight adventurer encountered in the old story-books.'

'You do me wrong in the supposition, mine host — gross wrong,' said Tressilian, 'I do not desire that Amy should ever turn thought upon me more. Let me but see her restored to her father, and all I have to do in Europe — perhaps in the world — is over and ended.'

'A wiser resolution were to drink a cup of sack, and forget her,' said the landlord. 'But five-and-twenty and fifty look on those matters with different eyes, especially when one case of peepers is set in the skull of a young gallant and the other in that of an old publican. I pity you, Master Tressilian, but I see not how I can aid you in the matter.'

'Only thus far, mine host,' replied Tressilian. 'Keep a watch on the motions of those at the Place, which thou canst easily learn without suspicion, as all men's news fly to the ale-bench, and be pleased to communicate the tidings in writing

to such person, and to no other, who shall bring you this ring as a special token, look at it — it is of value, and I will freely bestow it on you'

'Nay, sir,' said the landlord, 'I desire no recompense, but it seems an unadvised course in me, being in a public line, to connect myself in a matter of this dark and perilous nature. I have no interest in it.'

'You, and every father in the land, who would have his daughter released from the snares of shame, and sin, and misery, have an interest deeper than aught concerning earth only could create'

'Well, sir,' said the host, 'these are brave words, and I do pity from my soul the frank-hearted old gentleman, who has diminished his estate in good housekeeping for the honour of his country, and now has his daughter, who should be the stay of his age, and so forth, whisked up by such a kite as this Varney. And though your part in the matter is somewhat of the wildest, yet I will e'en be a madcap for company, and help you in your honest attempt to get back the good man's child, so far as being your faithful intelligencer can serve. And as I shall be true to you, I pray you to be trusty to me, and keep my secret, for it were bad for the custom of the Black Bear, should it be said the bear-warder interfered in such matters. Varney has interest enough with the justices to dismount my noble emblem from the post on which he swings so gallantly, to call in my license, and run me from garret to cellar'

'Do not doubt my secrecy, mine host,' said Tressilian, 'I will retain, besides, the deepest sense of thy service, and of the risk thou dost run, remember the ring is my sure token. And now, farewell, for it was thy wise advice that I should tarry here as short a time as may be'

'Follow me, then, sir guest,' said the landlord, 'and tread as gently as if eggs were under your foot instead of deal boards. No one must know when or how you departed.'

By the aid of his dark lantern he conducted Tressilian, as soon as he had made himself ready for his journey, through a long intricacy of passages, which opened to an outer court, and from thence to a remote stable, where he had already placed his guest's horse. He then aided him to fasten on the saddle the small portmanteau which contained his necessaries, opened a postern door, and with a hearty shake of the hand, and a reiteration of his promise to attend to what went on at Cumnor Place, he dismissed his guest to his solitary journey

CHAPTER IX

Far in the lane a lonely hut he found,
No tenant ventured on the unwholesome ground :
Here smokes his forge, he bates his sinewy arm,
And early strokes the sounding anvil warm ,
Around his shop the steely sparkles flew,
As for the steed he shaped the bending shoe

GAY's *Trivia*.

AS it was deemed proper by the traveller himself, as well as by Giles Gosling, that Tressilian should avoid being seen in the neighbourhood of Cumnor by those whom accident might make early risers, the landlord had given him a route, consisting of various by-ways and lanes, which he was to follow in succession, and which, all the turns and short-cuts duly observed, was to conduct him to the public road to Marlborough.

But, like counsel of every other kind, this species of direction is much more easily given than followed, and what betwixt the intricacy of the way, the darkness of the night, Tressilian's ignorance of the country, and the sad and perplexing thoughts with which he had to contend, his journey proceeded so slowly that morning found him only in the Vale of Whitehorse, memorable for the defeat of the Danes in former days, with his horse deprived of a forefoot shoe — an accident which threatened to put a stop to his journey by laming the animal. The residence of a smith was his first object of inquiry, in which he received little satisfaction from the dulness or sullenness of one or two peasants, early bound for their labour, who gave brief and indifferent answers to his questions on the subject. Anxious at length that the partner of his journey should suffer as little as possible from the unfortunate accident, Tressilian dismounted, and led his horse in the direction of a little hamlet, where he hoped either to find or hear tidings of such an artificer as he now wanted. Through a deep and muddy lane, he at length waded on to the place, which proved only an assemblage of

five or six miserable huts, about the doors of which one or two persons, whose appearance seemed as rude as that of their dwellings, were beginning the toils of the day. One cottage, however, seemed of rather superior aspect, and the old dame, who was sweeping her threshold, appeared something less rude than her neighbours. To her Tressilian addressed the oft-repeated question, whether there was a smith in this neighbourhood, or any place where he could refresh his horse? The dame looked him in the face with a peculiar expression, as she replied, 'Smith! ay, truly is there a smith, what wouldst ha' wi' un, mon?'

'To shoe my horse, good dame,' answered Tressilian, 'you may see that he has thrown a forefoot shoe.'

'Master Holiday!' exclaimed the dame, without returning any direct answer — 'Master Herasmus Holiday, come and speak to mon, and please you'

'*Favete linguis*,' answered a voice from within, 'I cannot now come forth, Gammer Sludge, being in the very sweetest bit of my morning studies'

'Nay, but, good now, Master Holiday, come ye out, do ye. Here's a mon would to Wayland Smith, and I care not to show him way to devil, his horse hath cast shoe.'

'*Quid mihi cum caballo?*' replied the man of learning from within, 'I think there is but one wise man in the hundred, and they cannot shoe a horse without him!'

And forth came the honest pedagogue, for such his dress bespoke him. A long, lean, shambling, stooping figure was surmounted by a head thatched with lank black hair somewhat inclining to grey. His features had the cast of habitual authority, which I suppose Dionysius carried with him from the throne to the schoolmaster's pulpit, and bequeathed as a legacy to all of the same profession. A black buckram cassock was gathered at his middle with a belt, at which hung, instead of knife or weapon, a goodly leathern pen-and-ink-case. His ferula was stuck on the other side, like harlequin's wooden sword, and he carried in his hand the tattered volume which he had been busily perusing.

On seeing a person of Tressilian's appearance, which he was better able to estimate than the country folks had been, the schoolmaster unbonneted, and accosted him with, '*Salve, domine Intelligisne linguam Latinam?*'

Tressilian mustered his learning to reply, '*Linguæ Latinæ haud penitus ignarus, venia tua, domine eruditissime, vernaculam libentius loquor*'

The Latin reply had upon the schoolmaster the effect which the mason's sign is said to produce on the brethren of the trowel. He was at once interested in the learned traveller, listened with gravity to his story of a tired horse and a lost shoe, and then replied with solemnity, 'It may appear a simple thing, most worshipful, to reply to you that there dwells, within a brief mile of these *tuguria*, the best *faber ferrarius*, the most accomplished blacksmith, that ever nailed iron upon horse. Now, were I to say so, I warrant me you would think yourself *compos voti*, or, as the vulgar have it, a made man.'

'I should at least,' said Tressilian, 'have a direct answer to a plain question, which seems difficult to be obtained in this country.'

'It is a mere sending of a sinful soul to the evil un,' said the old woman, 'the sending a living creature to Wayland Smith.'

'Peace, Gammer Sludge!' said the pedagogue, '*pauca verba*, Gammer Sludge, look to the furmity, Gammer Sludge, *curetur jentaculum*, Gammer Sludge, this gentleman is none of thy gossips' Then turning to Tressilian, he resumed his lofty tone, 'And so, most worshipful, you would really think yourself *felix bis terque* should I point out to you the dwelling of this same smith?'

'Sir,' replied Tressilian, 'I should in that case have all that I want at present, a horse fit to carry me forward—out of hearing of your learning' The last words he muttered to himself

'*O cæca mens mortalium!*' said the learned man, 'well was it sung by Junius Juvenalis, "*numinibus vota exaudita malignis!*"'

'Learned magister,' said Tressilian, 'your erudition so greatly exceeds my poor intellectual capacity, that you must excuse my seeking elsewhere for information which I can better understand.'

'There again now,' replied the pedagogue, 'how fondly you fly from him that would instruct you! Truly said Quintilian——'

'I pray, sir, let Quintilian be for the present, and answer, in a word and in English, if your learning can condescend so far, whether there is any place here where I can have opportunity to refresh my horse, until I can have him shod?'

'Thus much courtesy, sir,' said the schoolmaster, 'I can readily render you, that, although there is in this poor hamlet

—*nostra paupera regna* — no regular *hospitium*, as my namesake Erasmus calleth it, yet, forasmuch as you are somewhat embued, or at least tinged, as it were, with good letters, I will use my interest with the good woman of the house to accommodate you with a platter of furmity — an wholesome food for which I have found no Latin phrase — your horse shall have a share of the cow-house, with a bottle of sweet hay, in which the good woman Sludge so much abounds that it may be said of her cow, *foenum habet in cornu*, and if it please you to bestow on me the pleasure of your company, the banquet shall cost you *ne semissem quidem*, so much is Gammer Sludge bound to me for the pains I have bestowed on the top and bottom of her hopeful heir Dickie, whom I have painfully made to travel through the accidence.

‘Now, God yield ye for it, Master Herasmus,’ said the good Gammer, ‘and grant that little Dickie may be the better for his accident! and, for the rest, if the gentleman list to stay, breakfast shall be on the board in the wringing of a dishclout, and for horse-meat and man’s meat, I bear no such base mind as to ask a penny’

Considering the state of his horse, Tressilian, upon the whole, saw no better course than to accept the invitation thus learnedly made and hospitably confirmed, and take chance that, when the good pedagogue had exhausted every topic of conversation, he might possibly condescend to tell him where he could find the smith they spoke of. He entered the hut accordingly, and sat down with the learned Magister Erasmus Holiday, partook of his furmity, and listened to his learned account of himself for a good half-hour, ere he could get him to talk upon any other topic. The reader will readily excuse our accompanying this man of learning into all the details with which he favoured Tressilian, of which the following sketch may suffice.

He was born at Hogsnorton, where, according to popular saying, the pigs play upon the organ — a proverb which he interpreted allegorically, as having reference to the herd of Epicurus, of which litter Horace confessed himself a porker. His name of Erasmus he derived partly from his father having been the son of a renowned washerwoman, who had held that great scholar in clean linen all the while he was at Oxford — a task of some difficulty, as he was only possessed of two shirts, ‘the one,’ as she expressed herself, ‘to wash the other’ The vestiges of one of these *camiciæ*, as Master Holiday boasted, were

still in his possession, having fortunately been detained by his grandmother to cover the balance of her bill. But he thought there was a still higher and overruling cause for his having had the name of Erasmus conferred on him, namely, the secret presentiment of his mother's mind that, in the babe to be christened, was a hidden genius, which should one day lead him to rival the fame of the great scholar of Amsterdam. The schoolmaster's surname led him as far into dissertation as his Christian appellative. He was inclined to think that he bore the name of Holiday *quasi lucus a non lucendo*, because he gave such few holidays to his school. 'Hence,' said he, 'the schoolmaster is termed, classically, *ludi magister*, because he deprives the boys of their play.' And yet, on the other hand, he thought it might bear a very different interpretation, and refer to his own exquisite art in arranging pageants, morris-dances, May-day festivities, and such-like holiday delights, for which he assured Tressilian he had positively the purest and the most inventive brain in England, inasmuch, that his cunning in framing such pleasures had made him known to many honourable persons, both in country and in court, and especially to the noble Earl of Leicester. 'And although he may now seem to forget me,' he said, 'in the multitude of state affairs, yet I am well assured that, had he some pretty pastime to array for entertainment of the Queen's Grace, horse and man would be seeking the humble cottage of Erasmus Holiday. *Parvo contentus*, in the meanwhile, I hear my pupils parse and construe, worshipful sir, and drive away my time with the aid of the Muses. And I have at all times, when in correspondence with foreign scholars, subscribed myself Erasmus ab Die Fausto, and have enjoyed the distinction due to the learned under that title; witness the erudite Diedrichus Buckerschockius, who dedicated to me, under that title, his treatise on the letter tau. In fine, sir, I have been a happy and distinguished man.'

'Long may it be so, sir!' said the traveller; 'but permit me to ask, in your own learned phrase, *Quid hoc ad Iphychi bores*—what has all this to do with the shoeing of my poor nag?'

'*Festina lente*,' said the man of learning, 'we will presently come to that point. You must know that, some two or three years past, there came to these parts one who called himself Doctor Doboobie, although it may be he never wrote even *magister artium*, save in right of his hungry belly. Or it may be that, if he had any degrees, they were of the devil's giving,

for he was what the vulgar call a white witch, a cunning man, and such-like. Now, good sir, I perceive you are impatient, but if a man tell not his tale his own way, how have you warrant to think that he can tell it in yours ?'

'Well, then, learned sir, take your way,' answered Tressilian, 'only let us travel at a sharper pace, for my time is somewhat of the shortest.'

'Well, sir,' resumed Erasmus Holiday, with the most provoking perseverance, 'I will not say that this same Demetrius, for so he wrote himself when in foreign parts, was an actual conjurer, but certain it is, that he professed to be a brother of the mystical order of the Rosy Cross, a disciple of Geber, *ex nomine cujus venit verbum vernaculum*, gibberish. He cured wounds by salving the weapon instead of the sore, told fortunes by palmistry, discovered stolen goods by the sieve and shears, gathered the right maddow and the male fern seed, through use of which men walk invisible, pretended some advances towards the panacea or universal elixir, and affected to convert good lead into sorry silver.'

'In other words,' said Tressilian, 'he was a quacksalver and common cheat, but what has all this to do with my nag and the shoe which he has lost ?'

'With your worshipful patience,' replied the diffusive man of letters, 'you shall understand that presently, *patientia* then, right worshipful, which word, according to our Marcus Tullius, is "*difficilium rerum diurna perpessio*." Thus same Demetrius Doboobie, after dealing with the country, as I have told you, began to acquire fame *inter magnates*, among the prime men of the land, and there is likelihood he might have aspired to great matters, had not, according to vulgar fame—for I aver not the thing as according with my certain knowledge—the devil claimed his right one dark night, and flown off with Demetrius, who was never seen or heard of afterwards. Now here comes the *medulla*, the very marrow, of my tale. Thus Doctor Doboobie had a servant, a poor snake, whom he employed in trimming his furnace, regulating it by just measure, compounding his drugs, tracing his circles, cajoling his patients, *et sic de cæteris*. Well, right worshipful, the doctor being removed thus strangely, and in a way which struck the whole country with terror, this poor zany thinks to himself, in the words of Maro, "*Uno avulso, non deficit alter*", and, even as a tradesman's apprentice sets himself up in his master's shop when he is dead, or hath retired from business, so doth this Wayland assume the

dangerous trade of his defunct master But although, most worshipful sir, the world is ever prone to listen to the pretensions of such unworthy men, who are, indeed, mere *saltim banqui* and *charlatani*, though usurping the style and skill of doctors of medicine, yet the pretensions of this poor zany, this Wayland, were too gross to pass on them, nor was there a mere rustic, a villager, who was not ready to accost him in the sense of Persius, though in their own rugged words —

Diluis helleborum, certo compescere puncto
Nescius examen ? vetat hoc natura medendi ;

which I have thus rendered in a poor paraphrase of mine own —

Wilt thou mix hellebore, who doth not know
How many grains should to the mixture go ?
The art of medicine this forbids, I trow

Moreover, the evil reputation of the master, and his strange and doubtful end, or at least sudden disappearance, prevented any, excepting the most desperate of men, to seek any advice or opinion from the servant, wherefore, the poor vermin was likely at first to swarf for very hunger But the devil that serves him, since the death of Demetrius or Doboobie, put him on a fresh device This knave, whether from the inspiration of the devil or from early education, shoes horses better than e'er a man betwixt us and Iceland, and so he gives up his practice on the bipeds, the two-legged and unfledged species called mankind, and betakes him entirely to shoeing of horses 'Indeed' and where does he lodge all this time?' said Tressilian. 'And does he shoe horses well? Show me his dwelling presently'

The interruption pleased not the magister, who exclaimed, 'O, *cæca mens mortaliū!* though, by the way, I used that quotation before But I would the classics could afford me any sentiment of power to stop those who are so willing to rush upon their own destruction. Hear but, I pray you, the conditions of this man,' said he, in continuation, 'ere you are so unwilling to place yourself within his danger —'

'A' takes no money for a's work,' said the dame, who stood by, enraptured as it were with the fine words and learned apophthegms which glided so fluently from her erudite inmate, Master Holiday But this interruption pleased not the magister more than that of the traveller

'Peace,' said he, 'Gammer Sludge, know your place, if it be your will. *Sufflamina*, Gammer Sludge, and allow me to expound this matter to our worshipful guest Sir,' said he, again addressing Tressilian, 'this old woman speaks true, though in her own rude style, for certainly this *faber ferrarius*, or blacksmith, takes money of no one.'

'And that is a sure sign he deals with Satan,' said Dame Sludge, 'since no good Christian would ever refuse the wages of his labour'

'The old woman hath touched it again,' said the pedagogue, '*rem acu tetigit*—she hath pricked it with her needle's point. This Wayland takes no money, indeed, nor doth he show himself to any one'

'And can this madman, for such I hold him,' said the traveller, 'know aught like good skill of his trade?'

'Oh, sir, in that let us give the devil his due. Mulciber himself, with all his Cyclops, could hardly amend him. But assuredly there is little wisdom in taking counsel or receiving aid from one who is but too plainly in league with the author of evil.'

'I must take my chance of that, good Master Holiday,' said Tressilian, rising, 'and as my horse must now have eaten his provender, I must needs thank you for your good cheer, and pray you to show me this man's residence, that I may have the means of proceeding on my journey'

'Ay—ay, do ye show him, Master Herasmus,' said the old dame, who was, perhaps, desirous to get her house freed of her guest, 'a' must needs go when the devil drives'

'*Do manus*,' said the magister—'I submit, taking the world to witness that I have possessed this honourable gentleman with the full injustice which he has done, and shall do, to his own soul if he becomes thus a trinketer with Satan. Neither will I go forth with our guest myself, but rather send my pupil. *Ricardus! adsis, nebulo*'

'Under your favour, not so,' answered the old woman, 'you may peril your own soul, if you list, but my son shall budge on no such errand, and I wonder at you, Domine Doctor, to propose such a piece of service for little Dickie'

'Nay, my good Gammer Sludge,' answered the preceptor, 'Ricardus shall go but to the top of the hill, and indicate with his digit to the stranger the dwelling of Wayland Smith. Believe not that any evil can come to him, he having read this morning, fasting, a chapter of the Septuagint, and, moreover, having had his lesson in the Greek Testament.'

‘Ay,’ said his mother, ‘and I have sewn a sprig of witch’s elm in the neck of un’s doublet, ever since that foul thief has begun his practices on man and beast in these parts’

‘And as he goes oft, as I hugely suspect, towards this conjurer for his own pastime, he may for once go thither, or near it, to pleasure us, and to assist this stranger *Ergo, heus, Ricarde ! adsus, quæso, mi didascule*’

The pupil, thus affectionately invoked, at length came stumbling into the room — a queer, shambling, ill-made urchin, who, by his stunted growth, seemed about twelve or thirteen years old, though he was probably, in reality, a year or two older, with a carrotty pate in huge disorder, a freckled, sunburnt visage, with a snub nose, a long chin, and two peery grey eyes, which had a droll obliquity of vision, approaching to a squint, though perhaps not a decided one. It was impossible to look at the little man without some disposition to laugh, especially when Gammer Sludge, seizing upon and kissing him, in spite of his struggling and kicking in reply to her caresses, termed him her own precious pearl of beauty

‘*Ricarde*,’ said the preceptor, ‘you must forthwith, which is *profecto*, set forth so far as the top of the hill, and show this man of worship Wayland Smith’s workshop’

‘A proper errand of a morning,’ said the boy, in better language than Tressilian expected, ‘and who knows but the devil may fly away with me before I come back?’

‘Ay, marry may un,’ said Dame Sludge, ‘and you might have thought twice, Master Domine, ere you sent my dainty darling on arrow such errand. It is not for such doings I feed your belly and clothe your back, I warrant you!’

‘Pshaw! *nugæ*, good Gammer Sludge,’ answered the preceptor, ‘I ensure you that Satan, if there be Satan in the case, shall not touch a thread of his garment, for Dickie can say his pater with the best, and may defy the foul fiend — *Eumenides, Stygumquæ nefas*’

‘Ay, and I, as I said before, have sewed a sprig of the mountain-ash into his collar,’ said the good woman, ‘which will avail more than your clerkship, I wus, but for all that, it is ill to seek the devil or his mates either’

‘My good boy,’ said Tressilian, who saw, from a grotesque sneer on Dickie’s face, that he was more likely to act upon his own bottom than by the instructions of his elders, ‘I will give thee a silver groat, my pretty fellow, if you will but guide me to this man’s forge’

The boy gave him a knowing side-look, which seemed to promise acquiescence, while at the same time he exclaimed, 'I be your guide to Wayland Smith's! Why, man, did I not say that the devil might fly off with me, just as the kite there (looking to the window) is flying off with one of grandame's chicks?'

'The kite! — the kite!' exclaimed the old woman in return, and forgetting all other matters in her alarm, hastened to the rescue of her chicken as fast as her old legs could carry her.

'Now for it,' said the urchin to Tressilian, 'snatch your beaver, get out your horse, and have at the silver groat you spoke of.'

'Nay, but tarry — tarry,' said the preceptor, '*Sufflamina, Ricarde!*'

'Tarry yourself,' said Dickie, 'and think what answer you are to make to granny for sending me post to the devil.'

The teacher, aware of the responsibility he was incurring, hustled up in great haste to lay hold of the urchin, and to prevent his departure, but Dickie slipped through his fingers, bolted from the cottage, and sped him to the top of a neighbouring rising-ground, while the preceptor, despairing, by well-taught experience, of recovering his pupil by speed of foot, had recourse to the most homied epithets the Latin vocabulary affords to persuade his return. But to *mi anime, corculum meum*, and all such classical endearments, the truant turned a deaf ear, and kept frisking on the top of the rising-ground like a goblin by moonlight, making signs to his new acquaintance, Tressilian, to follow him.

The traveller lost no time in getting out his horse, and departing to join his elvish guide, after half-forcing on the poor deserted teacher a recompense for the entertainment he had received, which partly allayed the terror he had for facing the return of the old lady of the mansion. Apparently this took place soon afterwards, for ere Tressilian and his guide had proceeded far on their journey they heard the screams of a cracked female voice, intermingled with the classical oburgations of Master Erasmus Hollday. But Dickie Sludge, equally deaf to the voice of maternal tenderness and of magisterial authority, skipped on unconsciously before Tressilian, only observing that, 'If they cried themselves hoarse, they might go lick the honey-pot, for he had eaten up all the honey comb himself on yesterday even.'

CHAPTER X

There entering in, they found the goodman selfe
Full busylie unto his work ybent,
Who was to weet a wretched wearish elf,
With hollow eyes and rawbone cheeks forspent,
As if he had been long in prison pent

The Faery Queene.

‘**A**RE we far from the dwelling of this smith, my pretty lad?’ said Tressilian to his young guide
‘How is it you call me?’ said the boy, looking askew at him with his sharp grey eyes
‘I call you my pretty lad—is there any offence in that, my boy?’
‘No, but were you with my grandame and Dominie Holiday, you might sing chorus to the old song of

We three
Tom-fools be.’

‘And why so, my little man?’ said Tressilian
‘Because,’ answered the ugly urchin, ‘you are the only three ever called me pretty lad. Now my grandame does it because she is parcel blind by age, and whole blind by kindred, and my master, the poor dominie, does it to curry favour, and have the fullest platter of furrity, and the warmest seat by the fire. But what *you* call me pretty lad for, you know best yourself’
‘Thou art a sharp wag at least, if not a pretty one. But what do thy playfellows call thee?’
‘Hobgoblin,’ answered the boy, readily, ‘but for all that I would rather have my own ugly viznomy than any of their jolterheads, that have no more brains in them than a brick-bat.’
‘Then you fear not this smith, whom you are going to see?’
‘Me fear him!’ answered the boy, ‘if he were the devil folk think him, I would not fear him, but though there is something queer about him, he’s no more a devil than you are, and that’s what I would not tell to every one’

'And why do you tell it to me, then, my boy?' said Tressilian.

'Because you are another-guess gentleman than those we see here every day,' replied Dickie, 'and though I am as ugly as sin, I would not have you think me an ass, especially as I may have a boon to ask of you one day.'

'And what is that, my lad, whom I must not call pretty?' replied Tressilian.

'Oh, if I were to ask it just now,' said the boy, 'you would deny it me, but I will wait till we meet at court.'

'At court, Richard? are you bound for court?' said Tressilian.

'Ay — ay, that's just like the rest of them,' replied the boy, 'I warrant me you think, what should such an ill favoured, scrambling urchin do at court? But let Richard Sludge alone, I have not been cock of the roost here for nothing. I will make sharp wit mend foul feature.'

'But what will your grandame say, and your tutor, Dominie Holiday?'

'E'en what they like,' replied Dickie, 'the one has her chickens to reckon, and the other has his boys to whip. I would have given them the candle to hold long since, and shown this trumpery hamlet a fair pair of heels, but the dominie promises I should go with him to bear share in the next pageant he is to set forth, and they say there are to be great revels shortly.'

'And whereabout are they to be held, my little friend?' said Tressilian.

'Oh, at some castle far in the north,' answered his guide — 'a world's breadth from Berkshire. But our old dominie holds that they cannot go forward without him, and it may be he is right, for he has put in order many a fair pageant. He is not half the fool you would take him for, when he gets to work he understands, and so he can spout verses like a play actor, when, God wot, if you set him to steal a goose's egg, he would be drubbed by the gander.'

'And you are to play a part in his next show?' said Tressilian, somewhat interested by the boy's boldness of conversation and shrewd estimate of character.

'In faith,' said Richard Sludge, in answer, 'he hath so promised me, and if he break his word it will be the worse for him, for let me take the bit between my teeth, and turn my head down hill, and I will shake him off with a fall that may harm his bones. And I should not like much to hurt him neither,' said he, 'for the tiresome old fool has painfully

laboured to teach me all he could But enough of that ; here are we at Wayland Smith's forge door.'

'You jest, my little friend,' said Tressilian, 'here is nothing but a bare moor, and that ring of stones, with a great one in the midst, like a Cornish barrow'

'Ay, and that great flat stone in the midst, which lies across the top of these uprights,' said the boy, 'is Wayland Smith's counter, that you must tell down your money upon'

'What do you mean by such folly?' said the traveller, beginning to be angry with the boy, and vexed with himself for having trusted such a hare-brained guide

'Why,' said Dickie, with a grin, 'you must tie your horse to that upright stone that has the ring in't, and then you must whistle three times, and lay me down your silver groat on that other flat stone, walk out of the circle, sit down on the west side of that little thicket of bushes, and take heed you look neither to right nor to left for ten minutes, or so long as you shall hear the hammer clink, and whenever it ceases say your prayers for the space you could tell a hundred, or count over a hundred, which will do as well, and then come into the circle, you will find your money gone and your horse shod.'

'My money gone to a certainty!' said Tressilian 'but as for the rest—— Hark ye, my lad, I am not your schoolmaster, but if you play off your waggery on me, I will take a part of his task off his hands, and punish you to purpose.'

'Ay, when you catch me!' said the boy, and presently took to his heels across the heath, with a velocity which baffled every attempt of Tressilian to overtake him, loaded as he was with his heavy boots Nor was it the least provoking part of the urchin's conduct that he did not exert his utmost speed, like one who finds himself in danger or who is frightened, but preserved just such a rate as to encourage Tressilian to continue the chase, and then darted away from him with the swiftness of the wind, when his pursuer supposed he had nearly run him down, doubling at the same time, and winding, so as always to keep near the place from which he started

This lasted until Tressilian, from very weariness, stood still, and was about to abandon the pursuit with a hearty curse on the ill-favoured urchin, who had engaged him in an exercise so ridiculous But the boy, who had, as formerly, planted himself on the top of a hillock close in front, began to clap his long thin hands, point with his skinny fingers, and twist his wild and ugly features into such an extravagant expression of

laughter and derision, that Tressilian began half to doubt whether he had not in view an actual hobgoblin.

Provoked extremely, yet at the same time feeling an irresistible desire to laugh, so very odd were the boy's grimaces and gesticulations, the Cornishman returned to his horse, and mounted him with the purpose of pursuing Dickie at more advantage.

The boy no sooner saw him mount his horse than he hallooed out to him that, rather than he should spoil his white-footed nag, he would come to him, on condition he would keep his fingers to himself.

'I will make no conditions with thee, thou naughty varlet!' said Tressilian, 'I will have thee at my mercy in a moment.'

'Aha, Master Traveller,' said the boy, 'there is a marsh hard by would swallow all the horses of the Queen's Guard, I will into it, and see where you will go then. You shall hear the bittern bump and the wild drake quack ere you get hold of me without my consent, I promise you.'

Tressilian looked out, and, from the appearance of the ground behind the hillock, believed it might be as the boy said, and accordingly determined to strike up a peace with so light-footed and ready-witted an enemy. 'Come down,' he said, 'thou mischievous brat! Leave thy mopping and mowing, and come hither, I will do thee no harm, as I am a gentleman.'

The boy answered his invitation with the utmost confidence, and danced down from his stance with a galliard sort of step, keeping his eye at the same time fixed on Tressilian's, who, once more dismounted, stood with his horse's bridle in his hand, breathless and half exhausted with his fruitless exercise, though not one drop of moisture appeared on the freckled forehead of the urchin, which looked like a piece of dry and discoloured parchment, drawn tight across the brow of a fleshless skull.

'And tell me,' said Tressilian, 'why you use me thus, thou mischievous imp? or what your meaning is by telling me so absurd a legend as you wished but now to put on me? Or rather show me, in good earnest, this smith's forge, and I will give thee what will buy thee apples through the whole winter.'

'Were you to give me an orchard of apples,' said Dickie Sludge, 'I can guide thee no better than I have done. Lay down the silver token on the flat stone, whistle three times, then come sit down on the western side of the thicket of gorse. I will sit by you, and give you free leave to wring my head off,

unless you hear the smith at work within two minutes after we are seated.'

'I may be tempted to take thee at thy word,' said Tressilian, 'if you make me do aught half so ridiculous for your own mischievous sport, however, I will prove your spell. Here, then, I tie my horse to this upright stone. I must lay my silver groat here, and whistle three times, sayest thou?'

'Ay, but thou must whistle louder than an unfledged ousel,' said the boy, as Tressilian, having laid down his money, and half-ashamed of the folly he practised, made a careless whistle. 'You must whistle louder than that, for who knows where the smith is that you call for? He may be in the King of France's stables for what I know.'

'Why, you said but now he was no devil,' replied Tressilian. 'Man or devil,' said Dickie, 'I see that I must summon him for you', and therewithal he whistled sharp and shrill, with an acuteness of sound that almost thrilled through Tressilian's brain. 'That is what I call whistling,' said he, after he had repeated the signal thrice, 'and now to cover—to cover, or Whitefoot will not be shod this day.'

Tressilian, musing what the upshot of this mummary was to be, yet satisfied there was to be some serious result, by the confidence with which the boy had put himself in his power, suffered himself to be conducted to that side of the little thicket of gorse and brushwood which was farthest from the circle of stones, and there sat down, and, as it occurred to him that, after all, this might be a trick for stealing his horse, he kept his hand on the boy's collar, determined to make him hostage for its safety.

'Now, hush and listen,' said Dickie, in a low whisper, 'you will soon hear the tack of a hammer that was never forged of earthly iron, for the stone it was made of was shot from the moon'. And in effect Tressilian did immediately hear the light stroke of a hammer, as when a farrier is at work. The singularity of such a sound, in so very lonely a place, made him involuntarily start, but looking at the boy, and discovering, by the arch, malicious expression of his countenance, that the urchin saw and enjoyed his slight tremor, he became convinced that the whole was a concerted stratagem, and determined to know by whom, or for what purpose, the trick was played off.

Accordingly, he remained perfectly quiet all the time that the hammer continued to sound, being about the space usually em-

ployed in fixing a horse shoe. But the instant the sound ceased, Tressilian, instead of interposing the space of time which his guide had requested, started up with his sword in his hand, ran around the thicket, and confronted a man in a farrier's leathern apron, but otherwise fantastically attired in a bear-skin dressed with the fur on, and a cap of the same, which almost hid the sooty and begrimed features of the wearer. 'Come back — come back!' cried the boy to Tressilian, 'or you will be torn to pieces — no man lives that looks on him.' In fact, the invisible smith (now fully visible) heaved up his hammer, and showed symptoms of doing battle.

But when the boy observed that neither his own entreaties nor the menaces of the farrier appeared to change Tressilian's purpose, but that, on the contrary, he confronted the hammer with his drawn sword, he exclaimed to the smith in turn, 'Wayland, touch him not, or you will come by the worse!' the gentleman is a true gentleman, and a bold.'

'So thou hast betrayed me, Flibbertigibbet?' said the smith, 'it shall be the worse for thee!'

'Be who thou wilt,' said Tressilian, 'thou art in no danger from me, so thou tell me the meaning of this practice, and why thou drivest thy trade in this mysterious fashion.'

The smith, however, turning to Tressilian, exclaimed, in a threatening tone, 'Who questions the Keeper of the Crystal Castle of Light, the Lord of the Green Lion, the Rider of the Red Dragon? Hence! avoid thee, ere I summon Talpack with his fiery lance to quell, crush, and consume!' These words he uttered with violent gesticulation, mouthing and flourishing his hammer.

'Peace, thou vile cozener, with thy gipsy cant!' replied Tressilian, scornfully, 'and follow me to the next magistrate, or I will cut thee over the pate.'

'Peace, I pray thee, good Wayland!' said the boy, 'credit me, the swaggering vein will not pass here, you must cut boon whids.'¹

'I think, worshipful sir,' said the smith, sinking his hammer, and assuming a more gentle and submissive tone of voice, 'that when so poor a man does his day's job, he might be permitted to work it out after his own fashion. Your horse is shod, and your farrier paid. What need you cumber yourself further than to mount and pursue your journey?'

'Nay, friend, you are mistaken,' replied Tressilian, 'every

¹ Give good words — *Slang dialect*
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man has a right to take the mask from the face of a cheat and a juggler, and your mode of living raises suspicion that you are both.

'If you are so determined, sir,' said the smith, 'I cannot help myself save by force, which I were unwilling to use towards you, Master Tressilian, not that I fear your weapon, but because I know you to be a worthy, kind, and well-accomplished gentleman, who would rather help than harm a poor man that is in a strait.'

'Well said, Wayland,' said the boy, who had anxiously awaited the issue of their conference. 'But let us to thy den, man, for it is ill for thy health to stand here talking in the open air.'

'Thou art right, Hobgoblin,' replied the smith; and going to the little thicket of gorse on the side nearest to the circle, and opposite to that at which his customer had so lately couched, he discovered a trap-door curiously covered with bushes, raised it, and, descending into the earth, vanished from their eyes. Notwithstanding Tressilian's curiosity, he had some hesitation at following the fellow into what might be a den of robbers, especially when he heard the smith's voice, issuing from the bowels of the earth, call out, 'Flibbertigibbet, do you come last, and be sure to fasten the trap!'

'Have you seen enough of Wayland Smith now?' whispered the urchin to Tressilian, with an arch sneer, as if marking his companion's uncertainty.

'Not yet,' said Tressilian, firmly, and shaking off his momentary irresolution, he descended into the narrow staircase to which the entrance led, and was followed by Dickie Sludge, who made fast the trap-door behind him, and thus excluded every glimmer of daylight. The descent, however, was only a few steps, and led to a level passage of a few yards' length, at the end of which appeared the reflection of a lurid and red light. Arrived at this point, with his drawn sword in his hand, Tressilian found that a turn to the left admitted him and Hobgoblin, who followed closely, into a small square vault containing a smith's forge glowing with charcoal, the vapour of which filled the apartment with an oppressive smell, which would have been altogether suffocating, but that by some concealed vent the smithy communicated with the upper air. The light afforded by the red fuel, and by a lamp suspended in an iron chain, served to show that, besides an anvil, bellows, tongs, hammers, a quantity of ready-made horse-shoes, and other articles proper to the profession of a farrier, there were also stoves, alembics, crucibles,

retorts, and other instruments of alchemy The grotesque figure of the smith, and the ugly but whimsical features of the boy, seen by the gloomy and imperfect light of the charcoal fire and the dying lamp, accorded very well with all this mystical apparatus, and in that age of superstition would have made some impression on the courage of most men

But nature had endowed Tressilian with firm nerves, and his education, originally good, had been too sedulously improved by subsequent study to give way to any imaginary terrors, and after giving a glance around him, he again demanded of the artist who he was, and by what accident he came to know and address him by his name

'Your worship cannot but remember,' said the smith, 'that about three years since, upon St Lucy's Eve, there came a travelling juggler to a certain hall in Devonshire, and exhibited his skill before a worshipful knight and a fair company I see from your worship's countenance, dark as this place is, that my memory has not done me wrong'

'Thou hast said enough,' said Tressilian, turning away, as wishing to hide from the speaker the painful train of recollections which his discourse had unconsciously awakened.

'The juggler,' said the smith, 'played his part so bravely that the clowns and clown-like squires in the company hold his art to be little less than magical, but there was one maiden of fifteen or thereby, with the fairest face I ever looked upon, whose rosy cheek grew pale, and her bright eyes dim, at the sight of the wonders exhibited'

'Peace, I command thee — peace!' said Tressilian.

'I mean your worship no offence,' said the fellow, 'but I have cause to remember how, to relieve the young maiden's fears, you condescended to point out the mode in which these deceptions were practised, and to baffle the poor juggler by laying bare the mysteries of his art, as ably as if you had been a brother of his order She was indeed so fair a maiden that, to win a smile of her, a man might well ——'

'Not a word more of her, I charge thee!' said Tressilian
'I do well remember the night you speak of — one of the few happy evenings my life has known'

'She is gone, then,' said the smith, interpreting after his own fashion the sigh with which Tressilian uttered these words — 'she is gone, young, beautiful, and beloved as she was! I crave your worship's pardon, I should have hammered on another theme — I see I have unwarly driven the nail to the quick.'

This speech was made with a mixture of rude feeling which inclined Tressilian favourably to the poor artisan, of whom before he was inclined to judge very harshly. But nothing can so soon attract the unfortunate as real or seeming sympathy with their sorrows.

'I think,' proceeded Tressilian, after a minute's silence, 'thou wert in those days a jovial fellow, who could keep a company merry by song, and tale, and rebeck, as well as by thy juggling tricks, why do I find thee a laborious handicraftsman, plying thy trade in so melancholy a dwelling, and under such extraordinary circumstances?'

'My story is not long,' said the artist, 'but your honour had better sit while you listen to it.' So saying, he approached to the fire a three-footed stool, and took another himself, while Dickie Sludge, or Flibbertigibbet, as he called the boy, drew a cricket to the smith's feet, and looked up in his face with features which, as illuminated by the glow of the forge, seemed convulsed with intense curiosity. 'Thou too,' said the smith to him, 'shalt learn, as thou well deservest at my hand, the brief history of my life, and, in troth, it were as well tell it thee as leave thee to ferret it out, since nature never packed a shrewder wit into a more ungainly casket. Well, sir, if my poor story may pleasure you, it is at your command. But will you not taste a stoup of liquor? I promise you that even in this poor cell I have some in store.'

'Speak not of it,' said Tressilian, 'but go on with thy story, for my leisure is brief.'

'You shall have no cause to rue the delay,' said the smith, 'for your horse shall be better fed in the meantime than he hath been this morning, and made fitter for travel.'

With that the artist left the vault, and returned after a few minutes' interval. Here, also, we pause, that the narrative may commence in another chapter.

CHAPTER XI

I say, my lord can such a subtilty
(But all his craft ye must not wot of me,
And somewhat help I yet to his working),
That all the ground on which we ben riding,
Till that we come to Canterbury town,
He can all clean turnen so up so down,
And pave it all of silver and of gold.

The Canon's Yeoman's Prologue — Canterbury Tales

THE artist commenced his narrative in the following terms —

‘I was bred a blacksmith, and knew my art as well as e’er a black-thumb’d, leathern-apron’d, swart-faced knave of that noble mystery. But I tired of ringing hammer-tunes on iron stithies, and went out into the world, where I became acquainted with a celebrated juggler, whose fingers had become rather too stiff for legerdemain, and who wished to have the aid of an apprentice in his noble mystery. I served him for six years, until I was master of my trade. I refer myself to your worship, whose judgment cannot be disputed, whether I did not learn to ply the craft indifferently well?’

‘Excellently,’ said Tressilian, ‘but be brief’

‘It was not long after I had performed at Sir Hugh Robsart’s, in your worship’s presence,’ said the artist, ‘that I took myself to the stage, and have swaggered with the bravest of them all, both at the Black Bull the Globe, the Fortune, and elsewhere, but I know not how, apples were so plenty that year that the lads in the twopenny gallery never took more than one bite out of them, and threw the rest of the pippin at whatever actor chanced to be on the stage. So I tired of it, renounced my half-share in the company, gave my foil to my comrade, my buskins to the wardrobe, and showed the theatre a clean pair of heels.’

‘Well, friend, and what,’ said Tressilian, ‘was your next shift?’

‘I became,’ said the smith, ‘half-partner, half domestic, to a

man of much skill and little substance, who practised the trade of a physicianer'

'In other words,' said Tressilian, 'you were Jack Pudding to a quacksalver'

'Something beyond that, let me hope, my good Master Tressilian,' replied the artist, 'and yet, to say truth, our practice was of an adventurous description, and the pharmacy which I had acquired in my first studies for the benefit of horses was frequently applied to our human patients. But the seeds of all maladies are the same, and if turpentine, tar, pitch, and beef-suet, mingled with turmerick, gum-mastick, and one head of garlick, can cure the horse that hath been grieved with a nail, I see not but what it may benefit the man that hath been pricked with a sword. But my master's practice, as well as his skill, went far beyond mine, and dealt in more dangerous concerns. He was not only a bold and adventurous practitioner in physick, but also, if your pleasure so chanced to be, an adept, who read the stars, and expounded the fortunes of mankind, genethliacally, as he called it, or otherwise. He was a learned distiller of simples, and a profound chemist — made several efforts to fix mercury, and judged himself to have made a fair hit at the philosopher's stone. I have yet a programme of his on that subject, which, if your honour understandeth, I believe you have the better, not only of all who read, but also of him who wrote it'

He gave Tressilian a scroll of parchment, bearing at top and bottom, and down the margin, the signs of the seven planets, curiously intermingled with talismanical characters, and scraps of Greek and Hebrew. In the midst were some Latin verses, from a cabalistical author, written out so fairly, that even the gloom of the place did not prevent Tressilian from reading them. The tenor of the original ran as follows —

*'Si fixum solvas, faciasque volare solutum,
Et volucrem figas, facient te vivere tutum,
Si pariat ventum, valet auri pondere centum,
Ventus ubi vult spirat — capiat qui capere potest'*

'I protest to you,' said Tressilian, 'all I understand of this jargon is, that the last words seem to mean "Catch who catch can"'

'That,' said the smith, 'is the very principle that my worthy friend and master, Doctor Doboobie, always acted upon, until, being besotted with his own imaginations, and concerted of his

high chemical skill, he began to spend, in cheating himself, the money which he had acquired in cheating others, and either discovered or built for himself, I could never know which, this secret laboratory, in which he used to seclude himself both from patients and disciples, who doubtless thought his long and mysterious absences from his ordinary residence in the town of Far-ridingon were occasioned by his progress in the mystic sciences, and his intercourse with the invisible world. Me also he tried to deceive, but, though I contradicted him not, he saw that I knew too much of his secrets to be any longer a safe companion. Meanwhile, his name waxed famous, or rather infamous, and many of those who resorted to him did so under persuasion that he was a sorcerer. And yet his supposed advance in the occult sciences drew to him the secret resort of men too powerful to be named, for purposes too dangerous to be mentioned. Men cursed and threatened him, and bestowed on me, the innocent assistant of his studies, the nickname of the Devil's foot-post, which procured me a volley of stones as soon as ever I ventured to show my face in the street of the village. At length my master suddenly disappeared, pretending to me that he was about to visit his laboratory in this place, and forbidding me to disturb him till two days were past. When this period had elapsed, I became anxious, and resorted to this vault, where I found the fires extinguished and the utensils in confusion, with a note from the learned Doboobius, as he was wont to style himself, acquainting me that we should never meet again, bequeathing me his chemical apparatus and the parchment which I have just put into your hands, advising me strongly to prosecute the secret which it contained, which would infallibly lead me to the discovery of the grand magisterium'

'And didst thou follow this sage advice?' said Tressilian

'Worshipful sir, no,' replied the smith, 'for, being by nature cautious, and suspicious from knowing with whom I had to do, I made so many perquisitions before I ventured even to light a fire, that I at length discovered a small barrel of gunpowder, carefully hid beneath the furnace, with the purpose, no doubt, that, as soon as I should commence the grand work of the transmutation of metals, the explosion should transmute the vault and all in it into a heap of ruins, which might serve at once for my slaughter house and my grave. This cured me of alchemy, and fain would I have returned to the honest hammer and anvil, but who would bring a horse to be shod by the Devil's post? Meantime, I had won the regard of my

honest Flibbertigibbet here, he being then at Farrington with his master, the sage Erasmus Holiday, by teaching him a few secrets, such as please youth at his age, and after much counsel together, we agreed that, since I could get no practice in the ordinary way, I should try how I could work out business among these ignorant boors by practising upon their silly fears, and, thanks to Flibbertigibbet, who hath spread my renown, I have not wanted custom. But it is won at too great risk, and I fear I shall be at length taken up for a wizard, so that I seek but an opportunity to leave this vault when I can have the protection of some worshipful person against the fury of the populace, in case they chance to recognise me.

'And art thou,' said Tressilian, 'perfectly acquainted with the roads in this country?'

'I could ride them every inch by midnight,' answered Wayland Smith, which was the name this adept had assumed.

'Thou hast no horse to ride upon,' said Tressilian.

'Pardon me,' replied Wayland, 'I have as good a tit as ever yeoman bestrode, and I forgot to say it was the best part of the mediciner's legacy to me, excepting one or two of the choicest of his medical secrets, which I picked up without his knowledge and against his will.'

'Get thyself washed and shaved, then,' said Tressilian, 'reform thy dress as well as thou canst, and fling away those grotesque trappings, and, so thou wilt be secret and faithful, thou shalt follow me for a short time, till thy pranks here are forgotten. Thou hast, I think, both address and courage, and I have matter to do that may require both.'

Wayland Smith eagerly embraced the proposal, and protested his devotion to his new master. In a very few minutes he had made so great an alteration in his original appearance, by change of dress, trimming his beard and hair, and so forth, that Tressilian could not help remarking, that he thought he would stand in little need of a protector, since none of his old acquaintance were likely to recognise him.

'My debtors would not pay me money,' said Wayland, shaking his head, 'but my creditors of every kind would be less easily blinded. And, in truth, I hold myself not safe, unless under the protection of a gentleman of birth and character, as is your worship.'

So saying, he led the way out of the cavern. He then called loudly for Hobgoblin, who, after lingering for an instant, appeared with the horse furniture, when Wayland closed, and

sedulously covered up, the trap-door, observing, it might again serve him at his need, besides that the tools were worth somewhat. A whistle from the owner brought to his side a nag that fed quietly on the common, and was accustomed to the signal. While he accoutred him for the journey, Tressilian drew his own girths faster, and in a few minutes both were ready to mount.

'At this moment Sludge approached to bid them farewell.

'You are going to leave me, then, my old playfellow,' said the boy, 'and there is an end of all our game at bo-peep with the cowardly lubbards whom I brought hither to have their broad-footed nags shod by the devil and his imps?'

'It is even so,' said Wayland Smith, 'the best friends must part, Flibbertigibbet, but thou, my boy, art the only thing in the Vale of Whitehorse which I shall regret to leave behind me.'

'Well, I bid thee not farewell,' said Dickie Sludge, 'for you will be at these revels, I judge, and so shall I, for if Dominie Holiday take me not thither, by the light of day, which we see not in yonder dark hole, I will take myself there!'

'In good time,' said Wayland, 'but I pray you to do nought rashly.'

'Nay, now you would make a child — a common child of me, and tell me of the risk of walking without leading-strings. But before you are a mile from these stones you shall know by a sure token that I have more of the hobgoblin about me than you credit, and I will so manage that, if you take advantage, you may profit by my prank.'

'What dost thou mean, boy?' said Tressilian, but Flibbertigibbet only answered with a grin and a caper, and bidding both of them farewell, and at the same time exhorting them to make the best of their way from the place, he set them the example by running homeward with the same uncommon velocity with which he had baffled Tressilian's former attempts to get hold of him.

'It is in vain to chase him,' said Wayland Smith, 'for, unless your worship is expert in lark hunting, we should never catch hold of him, and, besides, what would it avail? Better make the best of our way hence, as he advises.'

They mounted their horses accordingly, and began to proceed at a round pace, as soon as Tressilian had explained to his guide the direction in which he desired to travel.

After they had trotted nearly a mile, Tressilian could not

help observing to his companion, that his horse felt more lively under him than even when he mounted in the morning.

'Are you avised of that?' said Wayland Smith, smiling. 'That is owing to a little secret of mine. I mixed that with an handful of oats which shall save your worship's heels the trouble of spurring those six hours at least. Nay, I have not studied medicine and pharmacy for nought.'

'I trust,' said Tressilian, 'your drugs will do my horse no harm?'

'No more than the mare's milk which foaled him,' answered the artist, and was proceeding to dilate on the excellence of his recipe, when he was interrupted by an explosion as loud and tremendous as the mine which blows up the rampart of a beleaguered city. The horses started, and the riders were equally surprised. They turned to gaze in the direction from which the thunder-clap was heard, and beheld, just over the spot they had left so recently, a huge pillar of dark smoke rising high into the clear blue atmosphere. 'My habitation is gone to wrack,' said Wayland, immediately conjecturing the cause of the explosion. 'I was a fool to mention the doctor's kind intentions towards my mansion before that limb of mischief Flubbertigibbet. I might have guessed he would long to put so rare a frolic into execution. But let us hasten on, for the sound will collect the country to the spot.'

So saying, he spurred his horse, and Tressilian also quickening his speed, they rode briskly forward.

'This, then, was the meaning of the little imp's token which he promised us?' said Tressilian, 'had we lingered near the spot, we had found it a love-token with a vengeance.'

'He would have given us warning,' said the smith, 'I saw him look back more than once to see if we were off — 't is a very devil for mischief, yet not an ill-natured devil either. It were long to tell your honour how I became first acquainted with him, and how many tricks he played me. Many a good turn he did me too, especially in bringing me customers, for his great delight was to see them sit shivering behind the bushes when they heard the click of my hammer. I think Dame Nature, when she lodged a double quantity of brains in that misshapen head of his, gave him the power of enjoying other people's distresses, as she gave them the pleasure of laughing at his ugliness.'

'It may be so,' said Tressilian, 'those who find themselves severed from society by peculiarities of form, if they do not

hate the common bulk of mankind, are at least not altogether indisposed to enjoy their mishaps and calamities.'

'But Flibbertigibbet,' answered Wayland, 'hath that about him which may redeem his turn for mischievous frolic, for he is as faithful when attached as he is tricky and malignant to strangers, and, as I said before, I have cause to say so.'

Tressilian pursued the conversation no farther, and they continued their journey towards Devonshire without farther adventure, until they alighted at an inn in the town of Marlborough, since celebrated for having given title to the greatest general (excepting one) whom Britain ever produced. Here the travellers received, in the same breath, an example of the truth of two old proverbs, namely, that Ill news fly fast, and that Listeners seldom hear a good tale of themselves.

The innyard was in a sort of combustion when they alighted, insomuch, that they could scarce get man or boy to take care of their horses, so full were the whole household of some news which flew from tongue to tongue, the import of which they were for some time unable to discover. At length, indeed, they found it respected matters which touched them nearly.

'What is the matter, say you, master?' answered, at length, the head hostler, in reply to Tressilian's repeated questions. 'Why, truly, I scarce know myself. But here was a rider but now, who says that the devil hath flown away with him they called Wayland Smith, that won'd about three miles from the Whitehorse of Berkshire, this very blessed morning, in a flash of fire and a pillar of smoke, and rooted up the place he dwelt in, near that old cockpit of upright stones, as cleanly as if it had all been delved up for a cropping.'

'Why, then,' said an old farmer, 'the more is the pity, for that Wayland Smith — whether he was the devil's crony or no I skill not — had a good notion of horse diseases, and it's to be thought the bots will spread in the country far and near, an Satan has not gien un time to leave his secret behind un.'

'You may say that, Gaffer Grimesby,' said the hostler in return, 'I have carried a horse to Wayland Smith myself, for he passed all farmers in this country.'

'Did you see him?' said Dame Alison Crane, mistress of the inn bearing that sign, and deigning to term 'husband' the owner thereof, a mean-looking hop o'-my-thumb sort of person, whose halting gait, and long neck, and meddling, henpecked insignificance are supposed to have given origin to the celebrated old English tune of 'My Dame hath a lame tame Crane.'

On this occasion he clurp'd out a repetition of his wife's question, 'Didst see the devil, Jack Hostler, I say?'

'And what if I did see un, Master Crane?' replied Jack Hostler, for, like all the rest of the household, he paid as little respect to his master as his mistress herself did.

'Nay, nought, Jack Hostler,' replied the pacific Master Crane, 'only if you saw the devil, methinks I would like to know what un's like?'

'You will know that one day, Master Crane,' said his help-mate, 'an ye mend not your manners and mind your business, leaving off such idle palabras. But truly, Jack Hostler, I should be glad to know myself what like the fellow was.'

'Why, dame,' said the hostler, more respectfully, 'as for what he was like I cannot tell, nor no man else, for why I never saw un.'

'And how didst thou get thine errand done,' said Gaffer Grimesby, 'if thou seedst him not?'

'Why, I had schoolmaster to write down ailment o' nag,' said Jack Hostler, 'and I went wi' the ugliest slip of a boy for my guide as ever man cut out o' lime-tree root to please a child withal.'

'And what was it? and did it cure your nag, Jack Hostler?' was uttered and echoed by all who stood around.

'Why, how can I tell you what it was?' said the hostler, 'simply it smelled and tasted — for I did make bold to put a pea's substance into my mouth — like hartshorn and savin mixed with vinegar, but then no hartshorn and savin ever wrought so speedy a cure. And I am dreading that, if Wayland Smith be gone, the bots will have more power over horse and cattle.'

The pride of art, which is certainly not inferior in its influence to any other pride whatever, here so far operated on Wayland Smith that, notwithstanding the obvious danger of his being recognised, he could not help winking to Tressilian, and smiling mysteriously, as if triumphing in the undoubted evidence of his veterinary skill. In the meanwhile, the discourse continued.

'E'en let it be so,' said a grave man in black, the companion of Gaffer Grimesby — 'e'en let us perish under the evil God sends us, rather than the devil be our doctor.'

'Very true,' said Dame Crane, 'and I marvel at Jack Hostler that he would peril his own soul to cure the bowels of a nag.'

'Very true, mistress,' said Jack Hostler, 'but the nag was my master's, and had it been yours, I think ye would ha' held me cheap enow an I had feared the devil when the poor beast was in such a taking. For the rest, let the clergy look to it. Every man to his craft, says the proverb—the parson to the prayer-book and the groom to his currycomb.'

'I vow,' said Dame Crane, 'I think Jack Hostler speaks like a good Christian and a faithful servant, who will spare neither body nor soul in his master's service. However, the devil has lifted him in time, for a constable of the hundred came hither this morning to get old Gaffer Pinniewinks, the trier of witches, to go with him to the Vale of Whitehorse to comprehend Wayland Smith, and put him to his probation. I helped Pinniewinks to sharpen his pincers and his poking-awl, and I saw the warrant from Justice Blindas.'

'Pooh—pooh, the devil would laugh both at Blindas and his warrant, constable and witch-finder to boot,' said old Dame Crank, the Papist laundress, 'Wayland Smith's flesh would mind Pinniewinks' awl no more than a cambric ruff minds a hot piccadilloe needle. But tell me, gentlefolks, if the devil ever had such a hand among ye, as to snatch away your smiths and your artists from under your nose, when the good abbots of Abingdon had their own? By Our Lady, no! they had their hallowed tapers, and their holy water, and their relics, and what not, could send the foulest fiends a packing. Go ask a heretic parson to do the like. But ours were a comfortable people.'

'Very true, Dame Crank,' said the hostler, 'so said Simpkins of Simonburn when the curate kissed his wife—"They are a comfortable people," said he.'

'Silence, thou foul-mouthed vermin,' said Dame Crank, 'is it fit for a heretic horse boy like thee to handle such a text as the Catholic clergy?'

'In troth no, dame,' replied the man of oats, 'and as you yourself are now no text for their handling, dame, whatever may have been the case in your day, I think we had e'en better leave un alone.'

At this last exchange of sarcasm, Dame Crank set up her throat, and began a horrible exclamation against Jack Hostler, under cover of which Tressilian and his attendant escaped into the house.

They had no sooner entered a private chamber, to which Goodman Crane himself had condescended to usher them, and

despatched their worthy and obsequious host on the errand of procuring wine and refreshment, than Wayland Smith began to give vent to his self-importance

'You see, sir,' said he, addressing Tressilian, 'that I nothing fabled in asserting that I possessed fully the mighty mystery of a farrier, or mareschal, as the French more honourably term us. These dog-hostlers, who, after all, are the better judges in such a case, know what credit they should attach to my medicaments. I call you to witness, worshipful Master Tressilian, that nought, save the voice of calumny and the hand of malicious violence, hath driven me forth from a station in which I held a place alike useful and honoured'

'I bear witness, my friend, but will reserve my listening,' answered Tressilian, 'for a safer time, unless, indeed, you deem it essential to your reputation to be translated, like your late dwelling, by the assistance of a flash of fire. For you see your best friends reckon you no better than a mere sorcerer'

'Now, Heaven forgive them,' said the artist, 'who confound learned skill with unlawful magic' I trust a man may be as skilful, or more so, than the best chururgeon ever meddled with horse-flesh, and yet may be upon the matter little more than other ordinary men, or at the worst no conjurer'

'God forbid else!' said Tressilian. 'But be silent just for the present, since here comes mine host with an assistant, who seems something of the least'

Everybody about the inn, Dame Crank herself included, had been indeed so interested and agitated by the story they had heard of Wayland Smith, and by the new, varying, and more marvellous editions of the incident, which arrived from various quarters, that mine host, in his righteous determination to accommodate his guests, had been able to obtain the assistance of none of his household, saving that of a little boy, a junior tapster, of about twelve years old, who was called Sampson

'I wish,' he said, apologising to his guests, as he set down a flagon of sack, and promised some food immediately — 'I wish the devil had flown away with my wife and my whole family instead of this Wayland Smith, who, I daresay, after all said and done, was much less worthy of the distinction which Satan has done him'

'I hold opinion with you, good fellow,' replied Wayland Smith, 'and I will drink to you upon that argument.'

'Not that I would justify any man who deals with the devil,' said mine host, after having pledged Wayland in a rousing draught of sack, 'but that—saw ye ever better sack, my masters?—but that, I say, a man had better deal with a dozen cheats and scoundrel fellows, such as this Wayland Smith, than with a devil incarnate, that takes possession of house and home, bed and board.'

The poor fellow's detail of grievances was here interrupted by the shrill voice of his helpmate, screaming from the kitchen, to which he instantly hobbled, craving pardon of his guests. He was no sooner gone than Wayland Smith expressed, by every contemptuous epithet in the language, his utter scorn for a uncompoop who stuck his head under his wife's apron-string, and intimated that, saving for the sake of the horses, which required both rest and food, he would advise his worshipful Master Tressilian to push on a stage farther, rather than pay a reckoning to such a mean-spirited, crow-trodden, hen-pecked cockcomb as Gaffer Crane.

The arrival of a large dish of good cow-heel and bacon something soothed the asperity of the artist, which wholly vanished before a choice capon, so delicately roasted that 'the lard frothed on it,' said Wayland, 'like May dew on a lily', and both Gaffer Crane and his good dame became, in his eyes, very painstaking, accommodating, obliging persons.

According to the manners of the times, the master and his attendant sat at the same table, and the latter observed, with regret, how little attention Tressilian paid to his meal. He recollected, indeed, the pain he had given by mentioning the maiden in whose company he had first seen him, but, fearful of touching upon a topic too tender to be tampered with, he chose to ascribe his abstinence to another cause.

'This fare is perhaps too coarse for your worship,' said Wayland, as the limbs of the capon disappeared before his own exertions, 'but had you dwelt as long as I have done in yonder dungeon, which Flibbertigibbet has translated to the upper element, a place where I dared hardly broil my food, lest the smoke should be seen without, you would think a fair capon a more welcome dainty.'

'If you are pleased, friend,' said Tressilian, 'it is well. Nevertheless, hasten thy meal if thou canst, for this place is unfriendly to thy safety, and my concerns crave travelling.'

Allowing, therefore, their horses no more rest than was absolutely necessary for them, they pursued their journey by a

forced march as far as Bradford, where they reposed themselves for the night

The next morning found them early travellers. And, not to fatigue the reader with unnecessary particulars, they traversed without adventure the counties of Wiltshire and Somerset, and, about noon of the third day after Tressilian's leaving Cumnor, arrived at Sir Hugh Robsart's seat, called Lidcote Hall, on the frontiers of Devonshire.

CHAPTER XII

Ah me ! the flower and blossom of your house,
The wind hath blown away to other towers

JOANNA BAILLIE'S *Family Legend*.

THE ancient seat of Lidcote Hall was situated near the village of the same name, and adjoined the wild and extensive forest of Exmoor, plentifully stocked with game, in which some ancient rights belonging to the Robsart family entitled Sir Hugh to pursue his favourite amusement of the chase. The old mansion was a low, venerable building, occupying a considerable space of ground, which was surrounded by a deep moat. The approach and drawbridge were defended by an octagonal tower, of ancient brickwork, but so clothed with ivy and other creepers that it was difficult to discover of what materials it was constructed. The angles of this tower were each decorated with a turret, whimsically various in form and in size, and, therefore, very unlike the monotonous stone pepper boxes which, in modern Gothic architecture, are employed for the same purpose. One of these turrets was square, and occupied as a clock-house. But the clock was now standing still—a circumstance peculiarly striking to Tressilian, because the good old knight, among other harmless peculiarities, had a fidgety anxiety about the exact measurement of time, very common to those who have a great deal of that commodity to dispose of, and find it lie heavy upon their hands—just as we see shopkeepers amuse themselves with taking an exact account of their stock at the time there is least demand for it.

The entrance to the courtyard of the old mansion lay through an archway, surmounted by the aforesaid tower, but the drawbridge was down, and one leaf of the iron studded folding-doors stood carelessly open. Tressilian hastily rode over the drawbridge, entered the court, and began to call loudly on the domestics by their names. For some time he was only answered by the echoes and the howling of the hounds, whose kennel lay

at no great distance from the mansion, and was surrounded by the same moat. At length Will Badger, the old and favourite attendant of the knight, who acted alike as squire of his body and superintendent of his sports, made his appearance. The stout, weather-beaten forester showed great signs of joy when he recognised Tressilian.

'Lord love you,' he said, 'Master Edmund, be it thou in flesh and fell? Then thou mayest do some good on Sir Hugh, for it passes the wit of man — that is, of mine own, and the curate's, and Master Mumblazen's — to do aught wi' un.'

'Is Sir Hugh then worse since I went away, Will?' demanded Tressilian.

'For worse in body — no, he is much better,' replied the domestic, 'but he is clean mazed as it were — eats and drinks as he was wont, but sleeps not, or rather wakes not, for he is ever in a sort of twilight, that is neither sleeping nor waking. Dame Swineford thought it was like the dead palsy. "But no — no, dame," said I, "it is the heart — it is the heart!"'

'Can ye not stir his mind to any pastimes?' said Tressilian.

'He is clean and quite off his sports,' said Will Badger, 'hath neither touched backgammon or shovel-board, nor looked on the big book of harrowtry wi' Master Mumblazen. I let the clock run down, thinking the missing the bell might somewhat move him, for you know, Master Edmund, he was particular in counting time, but he never said a word on't, so I may e'en set the old chime a-towling again. I made bold to tread on Bungay's tail too, and you know what a round rating that would ha' cost me once a-day, but he minded the poor tyke's rhyme no more than a madge-howlet whooping down the chimney — so the case is beyond me.'

'Thou shalt tell me the rest within doors, Will. Meanwhile, let this person be taken to the buttery, and used with respect. He is a man of art.'

'White art or black art, I would,' said Will Badger, 'that he had any art which could help us. Here, Tom Butler, look to the man of art; and see that he steals none of thy spoons, for, he added in a whisper to the butler, who showed himself at the window, 'I have known as honest a faced fellow have more to do than that.'

He then ushered Tressilian into a low parlour, and went, at the same time, to enquire in what state his master was, lest the sudden appearance of the darling pupil, and proposed son-in-law, should surprise him too strongly. He returned immediately, and said

that Sir Hugh was dozing in his elbow chair, but that Master Mumblazen would acquaint Master Tressilian the instant he awaked.

'But it is chance if he knows you,' said the huntsman, 'for he has forgotten the name of every hound in the pack. I thought about a week since he had gotten a favourable turn "Saddle me old Sorrel," said he, suddenly, after he had taken his usual night-draught out of the great silver grace-cup, "and take the hounds to Mount Hazelhurst to morrow" Glad men were we all, and out we had him in the morning, and he rode to cover as usual, with never a word spoken but that the wind was south and the scent would lie. But ere we had uncoupled the hounds, he began to stare round him, like a man that wakes suddenly out of a dream — turns bridle and walks back to hall again, and leaves us to hunt at leisure by ourselves, if we listed.'

'You tell a heavy tale, Will,' replied Tressilian, 'but God must help us — there is no aid in man'

'Then you bring us no news of young Mistress Amy? But what need I ask — your brow tells the story Ever I hoped that, if any man could or would track her, it must be you All's over and lost now But if ever I have that Varney within reach of a flight-shot, I will bestow a forked shaft on him, and that I swear by salt and bread'

As he spoke, the door opened, and Master Mumblazen appeared — a withered, thin, elderly gentleman, with a cheek like a winter apple, and his grey hair partly concealed by a small high hat, shaped like a cone, or rather like such a strawberry-basket as London fruiterers exhibit at their windows He was too sententious a person to waste words on mere salutation, so, having welcomed Tressilian with a nod and a shake of the hand, he beckoned him to follow to Sir Hugh's great chamber, which the good knight usually inhabited Will Badger followed, unasked, anxious to see whether his master would be relieved from his state of apathy by the arrival of Tressilian

In a long low parlour, amply furnished with implements of the chase, and with silvan trophies, by a massive stone chimney, over which hung a sword and suit of armour, somewhat obscured by neglect, sat Sir Hugh Robsart of Lincote, a man of large size, which had been only kept within moderate compass by the constant use of violent exercise It seemed to Tressilian that the lethargy under which his old friend appeared to labour had, even during his few weeks' absence, added bulk to his person, at least it had obviously diminished the vivacity of his

eye, which, as they entered, first followed Master Mumblazen slowly to a large oaken desk, on which a ponderous volume lay open, and then rested, as if in uncertainty, on the stranger who had entered along with him. The curate, a grey-headed clergyman, who had been a confessor in the days of Queen Mary, sat with a book in his hand in another recess in the apartment. He, too, signed a mournful greeting to Tressilian, and laid his book aside, to watch the effect his appearance should produce on the afflicted old man.

As Tressilian, his own eyes filling fast with tears, approached more and more nearly to the father of his betrothed bride, Sir Hugh's intelligence seemed to revive. He sighed heavily, as one who awakens from a state of stupor, a slight convulsion passed over his features, he opened his arms without speaking a word, and, as Tressilian threw himself into them, he folded him to his bosom.

'There is something left to live for yet,' were the first words he uttered, and while he spoke, he gave vent to his feelings in a paroxysm of weeping, the tears chasing each other down his sunburnt cheeks and long white beard.

'I ne'er thought to have thanked God to see my master weep,' said Will Badger, 'but now I do, though I am like to weep for company.'

'I will ask thee no questions,' said the old knight — 'no questions — none, Edmund, thou hast not found her, or so found her that she were better lost.'

Tressilian was unable to reply, otherwise than by putting his hands before his face.

'It is enough — it is enough. But do not thou weep for her, Edmund. I have cause to weep, for she was my daughter, thou hast cause to rejoice, that she did not become thy wife. Great God! Thou knowest best what is good for us. It was my nightly prayer that I should see Amy and Edmund wedded, had it been granted, it had now been gall added to bitterness.'

'Be comforted, my friend,' said the curate, addressing Sir Hugh, 'it cannot be that the daughter of all our hopes and affections is the vile creature you would bespeak her.'

'Oh no,' replied Sir Hugh, impatiently, 'I were wrong to name broadly the base thing she is become, there is some new court name for it, I warrant me. It is honour enough for the daughter of an old De'nshire clown to be the leman of a gay courtier — of Varney too — of Varney, whose grandsire was relieved by my father, when his fortune was broken, at the battle of — the battle

of—where Richard was slain, out on my memory! and I warrant none of you will help me——’

‘The battle of Bosworth,’ said Master Mumblazen, ‘stricken between Richard Crookback and Henry Tudor, grandsire of the Queen that now is, *primo Henrici Septimi*, and in the year one thousand four hundred and eighty five *post Christum natum*’¹

‘Ay, even so,’ said the old knight, ‘every child knows it. But my poor head forgets all it should remember, and remembers only what it would most willingly forget. My brain has been at fault, Tressilian, almost ever since thou hast been away, and even yet it hunts counter.’

‘Your worship,’ said the good clergyman, ‘had better retire to your apartment, and try to sleep for a little space. The physician left a composing draught, and our Great Physician has commanded us to use earthly means, that we may be strengthened to sustain the trials He sends us.’

‘True—true, old friend,’ said Sir Hugh, ‘and we will bear our trials manfully. We have lost but a woman. See, Tressilian,’—he drew from his bosom a long ringlet of fair hair—‘see this lock! I tell thee, Edmund, the very night she disappeared, when she bid me good even, as she was wont, she hung about my neck and fondled me more than usual, and I, like an old fool, held her by this lock, until she took her scissors, severed it, and left it in my hand—as all I was ever to see more of her!’

Tressilian was unable to reply, well judging what a complication of feelings must have crossed the bosom of the unhappy fugitive at that cruel moment. The clergyman was about to speak, but Sir Hugh interrupted him.

‘I know what you would say, Master Curate—after all, it is but a lock of woman’s tresses, and by woman shame, and sin, and death came into an innocent world. And learned Master Mumblazen, too, can say scholarly things of their inferiority.’

‘*C’est l’homme*,’ said Master Mumblazen, ‘*qui se bast, et qui conseille*’.

‘True,’ said Sir Hugh, ‘and we will bear us, therefore, like men who have both mettle and wisdom in us. Tressilian, thou art as welcome as if though hadst brought better news. But we have spoken too long dry-lipped. Amy, fill a cup of wine to Edmund and another to me.’ Then instantly recollecting that he had called upon her who could not hear, he shook his head, and said to the clergyman, ‘This grief is to my bewildered mind what the church of Ladcote is to our park—we may lose our—’

¹ [Compare p. 92, where the battle of Stoke is spoken of.]

selves among the briars and thickets for a little space, but from the end of each avenue we see the old grey steeple and the grave of my forefathers I would I were to travel that road to-morrow !'

Tressilian and the curate joined in urging the exhausted old man to lay himself to rest, and at length prevailed Tressilian remained by his pillow till he saw that slumber at length sunk down on him, and then returned to consult with the curate what steps should be adopted in these unhappy circumstances.

They could not exclude from these deliberations Master Michael Mumblazen, and they admitted him the more readily that, besides what hopes they entertained from his sagacity, they knew him to be so great a friend to taciturnity that there was no doubt of his keeping counsel. He was an old bachelor of good family, but small fortune, and distantly related to the house of Robsart, in virtue of which connexion, Lidcote Hall had been honoured with his residence for the last twenty years. His company was agreeable to Sir Hugh, chiefly on account of his profound learning, which, though it only related to heraldry and genealogy, with such scraps of history as connected themselves with these subjects, was precisely of a kind to captivate the good old knight, besides the convenience which he found in having a friend to appeal to, when his own memory, as frequently happened, proved infirm, and played him false concerning names and dates, which, and all similar deficiencies, Master Michael Mumblazen supplied with due brevity and discretion. And, indeed, in matters concerning the modern world, he often gave, in his enigmatical and heraldic phrase, advice which was well worth attending to, or, in Will Badger's language, started the game while others beat the bush.

'We have had an unhappy time of it with the good knight, Master Edmund,' said the curate. 'I have not suffered so much since I was torn away from my beloved flock, and compelled to abandon them to the Romish wolves.'

'That was in *tertio Mariæ*,' said Master Mumblazen.

'In the name of Heaven,' continued the curate, 'tell us, has your time been better spent than ours, or have you any news of that unhappy maiden, who, being for so many years the principal joy of this broken-down house, is now proved our greatest unhappiness? Have you not at least discovered her place of residence?'

'I have,' replied Tressilian. 'Know you Cumnor Place, near Oxford?'

'Surely,' said the clergyman, 'it was a house of removal for the monks of Abingdon.'

'Whose arms,' said Master Michael, 'I have seen over a stone chimney in the hall — a cross patonce betwixt four martlets'

'There,' said Tressilian, 'this unhappy maiden resides, in company with the villain Varney But for a strange mishap, my sword had revenged all our injuries, as well as hers, on his worthless head.'

'Thank God, that kept thine hand from blood guiltiness, rash young man!' answered the curate "'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will repay it"' It were better study to free her from the villain's nets of infamy'

'They are called, in heraldry, *laquei amoris*, or *lacs d'amour*,' said Mumblazen

'It is in that I require your aid, my friends,' said Tressilian, 'I am resolved to accuse this villain, at the very foot of the throne, of falsehood, seduction, and breach of hospitable laws, The Queen shall hear me, though the Earl of Leicester, the villain's patron, stood at her right hand.'

'Her Grace,' said the curate, 'hath set a comely example of continence to her subjects, and will doubtless do justice on this inhospitable robber But wert thou not better apply to the Earl of Leicester, in the first place, for justice on his servant? If he grants it, thou dost save the risk of making thyself a powerful adversary, which will certainly chance if, in the first instance, you accuse his master of the horse and prime favourite before the Queen.'

'My mind revolts from your counsel,' said Tressilian. 'I cannot brook to plead my noble patron's cause — the unhappy Amy's cause — before any one save my lawful sovereign Leicester, thou wilt say, is noble, be it so, he is but a subject like ourselves, and I will not carry my plaint to him, if I can do better Still, I will think on what thou hast said, but I must have your assistance to persuade the good Sir Hugh to make me his commissioner and fiduciary in this matter, for it is in his name I must speak, and not in my own Since she is so far changed as to dote upon this empty profligate courtier, he shall at least do her the justice which is yet in his power'

'Better she died *cælebs* and *sine prole*,' said Mumblazen, with more animation than he usually expressed, 'than part, *per pale*, the noble coat of Robsart with that of such a miscreant!'

'If it be your object, as I cannot question,' said the clergyman, 'to save, as much as is yet possible, the credit of this

unhappy young woman, I repeat, you should apply, in the first instance, to the Earl of Leicester. He is as absolute in his household as the Queen in her kingdom, and if he expresses to Varney that such is his pleasure, her honour will not stand so publicly committed.'

'You are right — you are right,' said Tressilian, eagerly, 'and I thank you for pointing out what I overlooked in my haste. I little thought ever to have besought grace of Leicester, but I could kneel to the proud Dudley, if doing so could remove one shade of shame from this unhappy damsel. You will assist me, then, to procure the necessary powers from Sir Hugh Robsart?'

The curate assured him of his assistance, and the herald nodded assent.

'You must hold yourselves also in readiness to testify, in case you are called upon, the open-hearted hospitality which our good patron exercised towards this deceitful traitor, and the solicitude with which he laboured to seduce his unhappy daughter.'

'At first,' said the clergyman, 'she did not, as it seemed to me, much affect his company, but latterly I saw them often together.'

'*Servant* in the parlour,' said Michael Mumblazen, 'and *passant* in the garden.'

'I once came on them by chance,' said the priest, 'in the South wood in a spring evening, Varney was muffled in a russet cloak, so that I saw not his face, they separated hastily, as they heard me rustle amongst the leaves, and I observed she turned her head and looked long after him.'

'With neck *reguardant*,' said the herald, 'and on the day of her flight, and that was on St. Austen's Eve, I saw Varney's groom, attired in his liveries, hold his master's horse and Mistress Amy's palfrey, bridled and saddled *proper*, behind the wall of the churchyard.'

'And now is she found mew'd up in his secret place of retirement,' said Tressilian. 'The villain is taken in the manner, and I well wish he may deny his crime, that I may thrust conviction down his false throat! But I must prepare for my journey. Do you, gentlemen, dispose my patron to grant me such powers as are needful to act in his name.'

So saying, Tressilian left the room.

'He is too hot,' said the curate, 'and I pray to God that He may grant him the patience to deal with Varney as is fitting.'

'Patience and Varney,' said Mumblazen, 'is worse heraldry than metal upon metal' He is more false than a siren, more rapacious than a griffin, more poisonous than a wyvern, and more cruel than a lion rampant.'

'Yet I doubt much,' said the curate, 'whether we can with all right ask from Sir Hugh Robsart, being in his present condition, any deed deputing his paternal right in Mistress Amy to whomsoever ——'

'Your reverence need not doubt that,' said Will Badger, who entered as he spoke, 'for I will lay my life he is another man when he wakes than he has been these thirty days past.'

'Ay, Will,' said the curate, 'hast thou then so much confidence in Doctor Diddleum's draught?'

'Not a whit,' said Will, 'because master ne'er tasted a drop on't, seeing it was emptied out by the housemaid. But here's a gentleman, who came attending on Master Tressilian, has given Sir Hugh a draught that is worth twenty of yon un I have spoken cunningly with him, and a better farrier, or one who hath a more just notion of horse and dog ailment, I have never seen, and such a one would never be unjust to a Christian man.'

'A farrier! you saucy groom And by whose authority, pray?' said the curate, rising in surprise and indignation, 'or who will be warrant for this new physician?'

'For authority, an it like your reverence, he had mine, and for warrant, I trust I have not been five-and-twenty years in this house without having right to warrant the giving of a draught to beast or body — I who can gie a drench, and a ball, and bleed, or blister, if need, to my very self'

The counsellors of the house of Robsart thought it meet to carry this information instantly to Tressilian, who as speedily summoned before him Wayland Smith, and demanded of him (in private, however), by what authority he had ventured to administer any medicine to Sir Hugh Robsart.

'Why,' replied the artist, 'your worship cannot but remember that I told you I had made more progress into my master's — I mean the learned Doctor Doboobie's — mystery than he was willing to own, and, indeed, half of his quarrel and malice against me was, that, besides that I got something too deep into his secrets, several discerning persons, and particularly a buxom young widow of Abingdon, preferred my prescriptions to his'

'None of thy buffoonery, sir,' said Tressilian, sternly 'If

thou hast trifled with us — much more, if thou hast done aught that may prejudice Sir Hugh Robsart's health — thou shalt find thy grave at the bottom of a tin mine'

'I know too little of the great *arcantum* to convert the ore to gold,' said Wayland, firmly. 'But truce to your apprehensions, Master Tressilian. I understood the good knight's case, from what Master William Badger told me, and I hope I am able enough to administer a poor dose of mandragora, which, with the sleep that must needs follow, is all that Sir Hugh Robsart requires to settle his distraught brains'

'I trust thou dealest fairly with me, Wayland?' said Tressilian.

'Most fairly and honestly, as the event shall show,' replied the artist. 'What would it avail me to harm the poor old man for whom you are interested? — you, to whom I owe it that Gaffer Pinniewinks is not even now rending my flesh and sinews with his accursed pincers, and probing every mole in my body with his sharpened awl — a murrain on the hands which forged it' — in order to find out the witch's mark? I trust to yoke myself as a humble follower to your worship's train, and I only wish to have my faith judged of by the result of the good knight's slumbers'

Wayland Smith was right in his prognostication. The sedative draught which his skill had prepared, and Will Badger's confidence had administered, was attended with the most beneficial effects. The patient's sleep was long and healthful, and the poor old knight awoke, humbled indeed in thought, and weak in frame, yet a much better judge of what ever was subjected to his intellect than he had been for some time past. He resisted for a while the proposal made by his friends that Tressilian should undertake a journey to court, to attempt the recovery of his daughter, and the redress of her wrongs, in so far as they might yet be repaired. 'Let her go,' he said, 'she is but a hawk that goes down the wind, I would not bestow even a whistle to reclaim her' But though he for some time maintained this argument, he was at length convinced it was his duty to take the part to which natural affection inclined him, and consent that such efforts as could yet be made should be used by Tressilian in behalf of his daughter. He subscribed, therefore, a warrant of attorney, such as the curate's skill enabled him to draw up, for in those simple days the clergy were often the advisers of their flock in law as well as in Gospel.

All matters were prepared for Tressilian's second departure within twenty-four hours after he had returned to Lincote Hall, but one material circumstance had been forgotten, which was first called to the remembrance of Tressilian by Master Mumblazen. 'You are going to court, Master Tressilian,' said he, 'you will please remember that your blazonry must be *argent* and *or*, no other tinctures will pass current' The remark was equally just and embarrassing. To prosecute a suit at court, ready money was as indispensable even in the golden days of Elizabeth as at any succeeding period, and it was a commodity little at the command of the inhabitants of Lincote Hall. Tressilian was himself poor, the revenues of good Sir Hugh Robsart were consumed, and even anticipated, in his hospitable mode of living, and it was finally necessary that the herald, who started the doubt, should himself solve it. Master Michael Mumblazen did so by producing a bag of money, containing nearly three hundred pounds in gold and silver of various coinage, the savings of twenty years, which he now, without speaking a syllable upon the subject, dedicated to the service of the patron whose shelter and protection had given him the means of making this little hoard. Tressilian accepted it without affecting a moment's hesitation, and a mutual grasp of the hand was all that passed betwixt them, to express the pleasure which the one felt in dedicating his all to such a purpose, and that which the other received from finding so material an obstacle to the success of his journey so suddenly removed, and in a manner so unexpected.

While Tressilian was making preparations for his departure early the ensuing morning, Wayland Smith desired to speak with him, and, expressing his hope that he had been pleased with the operation of his medicine in behalf of Sir Hugh Robsart, added his desire to accompany him to court. This was indeed what Tressilian himself had several times thought of, for the shrewdness, alertness of understanding, and variety of resource which this fellow had exhibited during the time they had travelled together, had made him sensible that his assistance might be of importance. But then Wayland was in danger from the grasp of law, and of this Tressilian reminded him, mentioning something, at the same time, of the pincers of Pinniewinks and the warrant of Master Justice Blindas. Wayland Smith laughed both to scorn.

'See you, sir!' said he, 'I have changed my garb from that of a farrier to a serving-man, but were it still as it was, look

at my mustachios, they now hang down, I will but turn them up, and dye them with a tincture that I know of, and the devil will scarce know me again.

He accompanied these words with the appropriate action, and in less than a minute, by setting up his mustachios and his hair, he seemed a different person from him that had but now entered the room. Still, however, Tressilian hesitated to accept his services, and the artist became proportionably urgent.

'I owe you life and limb,' he said, 'and I would fain pay a part of the debt, especially as I know from Will Badger on what dangerous service your worship is bound. I do not, indeed, pretend to be what is called a man of mettle — one of those ruffling tear-cats, who maintain their master's quarrel with sword and buckler. Nay, I am even one of those who hold the end of a feast better than the beginning of a fray. But I know that I can serve your worship better in such quest as yours than any of these sword-and-dagger men, and that my head will be worth an hundred of their hands.'

Tressilian still hesitated. He knew not much of this strange fellow, and was doubtful how far he could repose in him the confidence necessary to render him an useful attendant upon the present emergency. Ere he had come to a determination, the trampling of a horse was heard in the courtyard, and Master Mumblazen and Will Badger both entered hastily into Tressilian's chamber, speaking almost at the same moment.

'Here is a serving-man on the bonniest grey tit I ever see'd in my life,' said Will Badger, who got the start, — 'having on his arm a silver cognizance, being a fire-drake holding in his mouth a brick-bat, under a coronet of an earl's degree,' said Master Mumblazen, 'and bearing a letter sealed of the same.'

Tressilian took the letter, which was addressed 'To the worshipful Master Edmund Tressilian, our loving kinsman — These — ride, ride, ride — for thy life, for thy life, for thy life.' He then opened it, and found the following contents. —

'MASTER TRESSILIAN, OUR GOOD FRIEND AND COUSIN —

'We are at present so ill at ease, and otherwise so unhappily circumstanced, that we are desirous to have around us those of our friends on whose loving-kindness we can most especially repose confidence, amongst whom we hold our good

Master Tressilian one of the foremost and nearest, both in good will and good ability. We therefore pray you, with your most convenient speed, to repair to our poor lodging at Say's Court, near Deptford, where we will treat farther with you of matters which we deem it not fit to commit unto writing. And so we bid you heartily farewell, being your loving kinsman to command,

'RATCLIFFE, EARL OF SUSSEX.'

'Send up the messenger instantly, Will Badger,' said Tressilian, and as the man entered the room he exclaimed, 'Aha, Stevens, is it you? how does my good lord?'

'Ill, Master Tressilian,' was the messenger's reply, 'and having therefore the more need of good friends around him.'

'But what is my lord's malady?' said Tressilian, anxiously. 'I heard nothing of his being ill.'

'I know not, sir,' replied the man, 'he is very ill at ease. The leeches are at a stand, and many of his household suspect foul practice — witchcraft, or worse.'

'What are the symptoms?' said Wayland Smith, stepping forward hastily.

'Anan?' said the messenger, not comprehending his meaning.

'What does he ail?' said Wayland, 'where lies his disease?'

The man looked at Tressilian, as if to know whether he should answer these inquiries from a stranger, and receiving a sign in the affirmative, he hastily enumerated gradual loss of strength, nocturnal perspiration, and loss of appetite, faintness, etc.

'Joined,' said Wayland, 'to a gnawing pain in the stomach, and a low fever?'

'Even so,' said the messenger, somewhat surprised.

'I know how the disease is caused,' said the artist, 'and I know the cause. Your master has eaten of the manna of St Nicholas. I know the cure too — my master shall not say I studied in his laboratory for nothing.'

'How mean you?' said Tressilian, frowning, 'we speak of one of the first nobles of England. Bethink you, this is no subject for buffoonery.'

'God forbid!' said Wayland Smith. 'I say that I know his disease, and can cure him. Remember what I did for Sir Hugh Robsart.'

'We will set forth instantly,' said Tressilian. 'God calls us.'

Accordingly, hastily mentioning this new motive for his instant departure, though without alluding to either the suspicions of Stevens or the assurances of Wayland Smith, he took the kindest leave of Sir Hugh and the family at Lildcote Hall, who accompanied him with prayers and blessings, and, attended by Wayland and the Earl of Sussex's domestic, travelled with the utmost speed towards London

CHAPTER XIII

Ay, I know you have arsenic,
Vitriol, sal tartre, argaile, alkaly,
Cinoper I know all This fellow, Captain,
Will come in time to be a great distiller,
And give a say, I will not say directly,
But very near, at the philosopher's stone
The Alchemist

TRESSILIAN and his attendants pressed their route with all despatch. He had asked the smith, indeed, when their departure was resolved on, whether he would not rather choose to avoid Berkshire, in which he had played a part so conspicuous? But Wayland returned a confident answer. He had employed the short interval they passed at Lidcote Hall in transforming himself in a wonderful manner. His wild and overgrown thicket of beard was now restrained to two small mustachios on the upper lip, turned up in a military fashion. A tailor from the village of Lidcote (well paid) had exerted his skill, under his customer's directions, so as completely to alter Wayland's outward man, and take off from his appearance almost twenty years of age. Formerly, besmeared with soot and charcoal, overgrown with hair, and bent double with the nature of his labour, disfigured, too, by his odd and fantastic dress, he seemed a man of fifty years old. But now, in a handsome suit of Tressilian's livery, with a sword by his side, and a buckler on his shoulder, he looked like a gay ruffling serving-man, whose age might be betwixt thirty and thirty-five, the very prime of human life. His loutish, savage-looking demeanour seemed equally changed into a forward, sharp, and impudent alertness of look and action.

When challenged by Tressilian, who desired to know the cause of a metamorphosis so singular and so absolute, Wayland only answered by singing a stave from a comedy, which was then new, and was supposed, among the more favourable

judges, to augur some genius on the part of the author We are happy to preserve the couplet, which ran exactly thus —

‘ Ban — ban, Ca — Caliban !
Get a new master , be a new man ’

Although Tressilian did not recollect the verses, yet they reminded him that Wayland had once been a stage-player; a circumstance which, of itself, accounted indifferently well for the readiness with which he could assume so total a change of personal appearance The artist himself was so confident of his disguise being completely changed, or of his having completely changed his disguise, which may be the more correct mode of speaking, that he regretted they were not to pass near his old place of retreat

‘ I could venture,’ he said, ‘ in my present dress, and with your worship’s backing, to face Master Justice Blindas, even on a day of quarter sessions , and I would like to know what is become of Hobgoblin, who is like to play the devil in the world, if he can once slip the string and leave his granny and his dominie Ay, and the scathed vault ! ’ he said — ‘ I would willingly have seen what havoc the explosion of so much gunpowder has made among Doctor Demetrius Doboobie’s retorts and phials I warrant me, my fame haunts the Vale of the Whitehorse long after my body is rotten , and that many a lout ties up his horse, lays down his silver groat, and pipes like a sailor whistling in a calm, for Wayland Smith to come and shoe his tit for him But the horse will catch the founders ere the smith answers the call.’

In this particular, indeed, Wayland proved a true prophet , and so easily do fables rise, that an obscure tradition of his extraordinary practice in farriery prevails in the Vale of Whitehorse even unto this day , and neither the tradition of Alfred’s victory nor of the celebrated Pusey horn are better preserved in Berkshire than the wild legend of Wayland Smith.¹

The haste of the travellers admitted their making no stay upon their journey, save what the refreshment of the horses required , and as many of the places through which they passed were under the influence of the Earl of Leicester, or persons immediately dependent on him, they thought it prudent to disguise their names and the purpose of their journey On such occasions the agency of Wayland Smith (by which name we shall continue to distinguish the artist, though his real name

¹ See Note 4

was Lancelot Wayland) was extremely serviceable. He seemed, indeed, to have a pleasure in displaying the alertness with which he could baffle investigation, and amuse himself by putting the curiosity of tapsters and innkeepers on a false scent. During the course of their brief journey, three different and inconsistent reports were circulated by him on their account, namely, first, that Tressilian was the Lord Deputy of Ireland, come over in disguise to take the Queen's pleasure concerning the great rebel Rory Oge MacCarthy MacMahon, secondly, that the said Tressilian was an agent of Monsieur, coming to urge his suit to the hand of Elizabeth, thirdly, that he was the Duke of Medina, come over, incognito, to adjust the quarrel betwixt Philip and that princess.

Tressilian was angry, and expostulated with the artist on the various inconveniences, and, in particular, the unnecessary degree of attention, to which they were subjected by the figments he thus circulated, but he was pacified (for who could be proof against such an argument?) by Wayland's assuring him that a general importance was attached to his own (Tressilian's) striking presence, which rendered it necessary to give an extraordinary reason for the rapidity and secrecy of his journey.

At length they approached the metropolis, where, owing to the more general recourse of strangers, their appearance excited neither observation nor inquiry, and finally they entered London itself.

It was Tressilian's purpose to go down directly to Deptford, where Lord Sussex resided, in order to be near the court, then held at Greenwich, the favourite residence of Elizabeth, and honoured as her birthplace. Still, a brief halt in London was necessary, and it was somewhat prolonged by the earnest entreaties of Wayland Smith, who desired permission to take a walk through the city.

'Take thy sword and buckler, and follow me, then,' said Tressilian, 'I am about to walk myself, and we will go in company.'

This he said, because he was not altogether so secure of the fidelity of his new retainer as to lose sight of him at this interesting moment, when rival factions at the court of Elizabeth were running so high. Wayland Smith willingly acquiesced in the precaution, of which he probably conjectured the motive, but only stipulated that his master should enter the shops of such chemists or apothecaries as he should point out in walking

through Fleet Street, and permit him to make some necessary purchases Tressilian agreed, and, obeying the signal of his attendant, walked successively into more than four or five shops, where he observed that Wayland purchased in each only one single drug, in various quantities. The medicines which he first asked for were readily furnished, each in succession, but those which he afterwards required were less easily supplied, and Tressilian observed that Wayland more than once, to the surprise of the shopkeeper, returned the gum or herb that was offered to him, and compelled him to exchange it for the right sort, or else went on to seek it elsewhere. But one ingredient, in particular, seemed almost impossible to be found. Some chemists plainly admitted they had never seen it, others denied that such a drug existed, excepting in the imagination of crazy alchemists, and most of them attempted to satisfy their customer by producing some substitute, which, when rejected by Wayland as not being what he had asked for, they maintained possessed, in a superior degree, the self-same qualities. In general, they all displayed some curiosity concerning the purpose for which he wanted it. One old, meagre chemist, to whom the artist put the usual question, in terms which Tressilian neither understood nor could recollect, answered frankly, there was none of that drug in London, unless Yoglan the Jew chanced to have some of it upon hand.

'I thought as much,' said Wayland. And as soon as they left the shop, he said to Tressilian, 'I crave your pardon, sir, but no artist can work without his tools. I must needs go to this Yoglan's, and I promise you that, if this detains you longer than your leisure seems to permit, you shall, nevertheless, be well repaid by the use I will make of this rare drug. Permit me,' he added, 'to walk before you, for we are now to quit the broad street, and we will make double speed if I lead the way.'

Tressilian acquiesced, and, following the smith down a lane which turned to the left hand towards the river, he found that his guide walked on with great speed, and apparently perfect knowledge of the town, through a labyrinth of by-streets, courts, and blind alleys, until at length Wayland paused in the midst of a very narrow lane, the termination of which showed a peep of the Thames looking misty and muddy, which background was crossed saltierwise, as Mr Mumblazen might have said, by the masts of two lighters that lay waiting for the tide. The shop under which he halted had not, as in modern days, a glazed window, but a paltry canvas screen surrounded such

a stall as a cobbler now occupies, having the front open, much in the manner of a fishmonger's booth of the present day. A little old smock-faced man, the very reverse of a Jew in complexion, for he was very soft-haired as well as beardless, appeared, and with many courtesies asked Wayland what he pleased to want. He had no sooner named the drug than the Jew started and looked surprised. 'And vat might your vorship vant vith that drug, which is not named, mein God, in forty years as I have been chemist here?'

'These questions it is no part of my commission to answer,' said Wayland, 'I only wish to know if you have what I want, and having it, are willing to sell it?'

'Ay, mein God, for having it, that I have, and for selling it, I am a chemist, and sell every drug.' So saying, he exhibited a powder, and then continued, 'But it will cost much monies. Vat I ave cost its weight in gold — ay, gold well-refined — I vill say six times. It comes from Mount Sinai, where we had our blessed Law given forth, and the plant blossoms but once in one hundred year.'

'I do not know how often it is gathered on Mount Sinai,' said Wayland, after looking at the drug offered him with great disdain, 'but I will wager my sword and buckler against your gaberdine that this trash you offer me, instead of what I asked for, may be had for gathering any day of the week in the castle ditch of Aleppo.'

'You are a rude man,' said the Jew, 'and, besides, I ave no better than that, or, if I ave, I will not sell it without order of a physician, or without you tell me vat you make of it.'

The artist made brief answer in a language of which Tresilian could not understand a word, and which seemed to strike the Jew with the utmost astonishment. He stared upon Wayland like one who has suddenly recognised some mighty hero or dreaded potentate in the person of an unknown and unmarked stranger. 'Holy Elias!' he exclaimed, when he had recovered the first stunning effects of his surprise, and then passing from his former suspicious and surly manner to the very extremity of obsequiousness, he cringed low to the artist, and besought him to enter his poor house, to bless his miserable threshold by crossing it.

'Vill you not taste a cup vith the poor Jew, Zacharias Yoglan? Vill you Tokay ave? — vill you Lachrymæ taste? — vill you ——'

'You offend in your proffers,' said Wayland, 'minister to me in what I require of you, and forbear further discourse'

The rebuked Israelite took his bunch of keys, and opening with circumspection a cabinet which seemed more strongly secured than the other cases of drugs and medicines amongst which it stood, he drew out a little secret drawer, having a glass lid, and containing a small portion of a black powder. Thus he offered to Wayland, his manner conveying the deepest devotion towards him, though an avaricious and jealous expression, which seemed to grudge every grain of what his customer was about to possess himself disputed ground in his countenance with the obsequious deference which he desired it should exhibit.

'Have you scales?' said Wayland.

The Jew pointed to those which lay ready for common use in the shop, but he did so with a puzzled expression of doubt and fear which did not escape the artist.

'They must be other than these,' said Wayland, sternly, 'know you not that holy things lose their virtue if weighed in an unjust balance?'

The Jew hung his head, took from a steel-plated casket a pair of scales beautifully mounted, and said, as he adjusted them for the artist's use — 'With these I do mine own experiment, one hair of the high-priest's beard would turn them.'

'It suffices,' said the artist, and weighed out two drachms for himself of the black powder, which he very carefully folded up and put into his pouch with the other drugs. He then demanded the price of the Jew, who answered, shaking his head and bowing —

'No price — no, nothing at all from such as you. But you will see the poor Jew again? — you will look into his laboratory, where, God help him, he hath dried himself to the substance of the withered gourd of Jonah, the holy prophet? You will have pity on him, and show him one little step on the great road?'

'Hush!' said Wayland, laying his finger mysteriously on his mouth, 'it may be we shall meet again. thou hast already the *schahmajm*, as thine own rabbis call it — the general creation, watch, therefore, and pray, for thou must attain the knowledge of Alchahest Elixir Samech ere I may commune farther with thee.' Then returning with a slight nod the reverential congees of the Jew, he walked gravely up the lane, followed by his master, whose first observation on the scene he had just witnessed was, that Wayland ought to have paid the man for his drug, whatever it was.

'I pay him!' said the artist. 'May the foul fiend pay me if I do! Had it not been that I thought it might displease your worship, I would have had an ounce or two of gold out of him, in exchange for the same just weight of brick-dust.'

'I advise you to practise no such knavery while waiting upon me,' said Tressilian.

'Did I not say,' answered the artist, 'that for that reason alone I forbore him for the present? Knavery, call you it? Why, yonder wretched skeleton hath wealth sufficient to pave the whole lane he lives in with dollars, and scarce miss them out of his own iron chest, yet he goes mad after the philosopher's stone, and, besides, he would have cheated a poor serving-man, as he thought me at first, with trash that was not worth a penny. "Match for match," quoth the devil to the collier if his false medicine was worth my good crowns, my true brick-dust is as well worth his good gold.'

'It may be so for aught I know,' said Tressilian, 'in dealing amongst Jews and apothecaries, but understand that to have such tricks of legerdemain practised by one attending on me diminishes my honour, and that I will not permit them. I trust thou hast made up thy purchases?'

'I have, sir,' replied Wayland, 'and with these drugs will I, this very day, compound the true orvietan,¹ that noble medicine which is so seldom found genuine and effective within these realms of Europe, for want of that most rare and precious drug which I got but now from Yogan.'

'But why not have made all your purchases at one shop?' said his master, 'we have lost nearly an hour in running from one pounder of simples to another.'

'Content you, sir,' said Wayland. 'No man shall learn my secret, and it would not be mine long were I to buy all my materials from one chemist.'

They now returned to their inn, the famous Bell-Savage, and while the Lord Sussex's servant prepared the horses for their journey, Wayland, obtaining from the cook the service of a mortar, shut himself up in a private chamber, where he mixed, pounded, and amalgamated the drugs which he had bought, each in its own proportion, with a readiness and address that plainly showed him well practised in all the manual operations of pharmacy.

By the time Wayland's electuary was prepared the horses were ready, and a short hour's riding brought them to the pres-

¹ See Note 5

ent habitation of Lord Sussex, an ancient house, called Say's Court,¹ near Deptford, which had long pertained to a family of that name, but had for upwards of a century been possessed by the ancient and honourable family of Evelyn. The present representative of that ancient house took a deep interest in the Earl of Sussex, and had willingly accommodated both him and his numerous retinue in his hospitable mansion. Say's Court was afterwards the residence of the celebrated Mr Evelyn,² whose *Silva* is still the manual of British planters, and whose life, manners, and principles, as illustrated in his *Memoirs*, ought equally to be the manual of English gentlemen

¹ The court has now entirely disappeared, and its site is occupied by a workhouse (*Laing*)

² Evelyn's name has also become familiar through his *Memoirs*, comprising a Diary from 1641 to 1705 and a Selection of Familiar Letters published from his MSS, discovered at Say's Court in 1818 (*Laing*)



QUEEN ELIZABETH

Painting by Frd. Zuccherò "so-called Ermine portrait"
in the possession of the Marquis of Salisbury
Hatfield House

had done good service in Ireland and in Scotland, and especially in the great northern rebellion, in 1569, which was quelled, in a great measure, by his military talents. He was, therefore, naturally surrounded and looked up to by those who wished to make arms their road to distinction. The Earl of Sussex, moreover, was of more ancient and honourable descent than his rival, uniting in his person the representation of the Fitz-Walters, as well as of the Ratchliffes, while the scutcheon of Leicester was stained by the degradation of his grandfather, the oppressive minister of Henry VII, and scarce improved by that of his father, the unhappy Dudley Duke of Northumberland, executed on Tower Hill, August 22, 1553. But in person, features, and address, weapons so formidable in the court of a female sovereign, Leicester had advantages more than sufficient to counterbalance the military services, high blood, and frank bearing of the Earl of Sussex, and he bore in the eye of the court and kingdom the higher share in Elizabeth's favour, though (for such was her uniform policy) by no means so decidedly expressed as to warrant him against the final preponderance of his rival's pretensions. The illness of Sussex therefore happened so opportunely for Leicester as to give rise to strange surmises among the public, while the followers of the one earl were filled with the deepest apprehensions, and those of the other with the highest hopes of its probable issue. Meanwhile — for in that old time men never forgot the probability that the matter might be determined by length of sword — the retainers of each noble flocked around their patron, appeared well armed in the vicinity of the court itself, and disturbed the ear of the sovereign by their frequent and alarming debates, held even within the precincts of her palace. This preliminary statement is necessary to render what follows intelligible to the reader.¹

On Tressilian's arrival at Say's Court, he found the place filled with the retainers of the Earl of Sussex, and of the gentlemen who came to attend their patron in his illness. Arms were in every hand, and a deep gloom on every countenance, as if they had apprehended an immediate and violent assault from the opposite faction. In the hall, however, to which Tressilian was ushered by one of the earl's attendants, while another went to inform Sussex of his arrival, he found only two gentlemen in waiting. There was a remarkable contrast in their dress, appearance, and manners. The attire of the elderly gentle-

¹ See Leicester and Sussex. Note 6

man, a person, as it seemed, of quality, and in the prime of life, was very plain and soldierlike, his stature low, his limbs stout, his bearing ungraceful, and his features of that kind which express sound common sense, without a grain of vivacity or imagination. The younger, who seemed about twenty or upwards, was clad in the gayest habit used by persons of quality at the period, wearing a crimson velvet cloak richly ornamented with lace and embroidery, with a bonnet of the same, encircled with a gold chain turned three times round it and secured by a medal. His hair was adjusted very nearly like that of some fine gentlemen of our own time — that is, it was combed upwards, and made to stand as it were on end, and in his ears he wore a pair of silver ear-rings, having each a pearl of considerable size. The countenance of this youth, besides being regularly handsome and accompanied by a fine person, was animated and striking in a degree that seemed to speak at once the firmness of a decided and the fire of an enterprising character, the power of reflection and the promptitude of determination.

Both these gentlemen reclined nearly in the same posture on benches near each other, but each seeming engaged in his own meditations, looked straight upon the wall which was opposite to them, without speaking to his companion. The looks of the elder were of that sort which convinced the beholder that, in looking on the wall, he saw no more than the side of an old hall hung around with cloaks, antlers, bucklers, old pieces of armour, partizans, and the similar articles which were usually the furniture of such a place. The look of the younger gallant had in it something imaginative, he was sunk in reverie, and it seemed as if the empty space of air betwixt him and the wall were the stage of a theatre on which his fancy was mustering his own *dramatis personæ*, and treating him with sights far different from those which his awakened and earthly vision could have offered.

At the entrance of Tressilian both started from their musing and bade him welcome, the younger, in particular, with great appearance of animation and cordiality.

'Thou art welcome, Tressilian,' said the youth, 'thy philosophy stole thee from us when this household had objects of ambition to offer it is an honest philosophy, since it returns thee to us when there are only dangers to be shared.'

'Is my lord, then, so dangerously indisposed?' said Tressilian

'We fear the very worst,' answered the elder gentleman, 'and by the worst practice.'

'Fie,' replied Tressilian, 'my Lord of Leicester is honourable'

'What doth he with such attendants, then, as he hath about him?' said the younger gallant 'The man who raises the devil may be honest, but he is answerable for the mischief which the fiend does for all that'

'And is this all that are of you, my mates,' said Tressilian, 'that are about my lord in his utmost straits?'

'No — no,' replied the elder gentleman, 'there are Tracy, Markham, and several more, but we keep watch here by two at once, and some are weary and are sleeping in the gallery above'

'And some,' said the young man, 'are gone down to the dock yonder at Deptford, to look out such a hulk as they may purchase by clubbing their broken fortunes, and so soon as all is over we will lay our noble lord in a noble green grave, have a blow at those who have hurried him thither, if opportunity suits, and then sail for the Indies with heavy hearts and light purses'

'It may be,' said Tressilian, 'that I will embrace the same purpose, so soon as I have settled some business at court'

'Thou business at court!' they both exclaimed at once, 'and thou make the Indian voyage!'

'Why, Tressilian,' said the younger man, 'art thou not wedded, and beyond these flaws of fortune that drive folks out to sea when their bark bears fairest for the haven? What has become of the lovely Indamira that was to match my Amoret for truth and beauty?'

'Speak not of her!' said Tressilian, averting his face

'Ay, stands it so with you?' said the youth, taking his hand very affectionately, 'then, fear not I will again touch the green wound. But it is strange as well as sad news. Are none of our fair and merry fellowship to escape shipwreck of fortune and happiness in this sudden tempest? I had hoped thou wert in harbour, at least, my dear Edmund. But truly says another dear friend of thy name —

What man that sees the ever whirling wheel
Of chance, the which all mortal things doth sway,
But that thereby doth find and plainly feel,
How mutability in them doth play
Her cruel sports to many men's decay'

The elder gentleman had risen from his bench, and was pacing the hall with some impatience, while the youth, with

much earnestness and feeling, recited these lines. When he had done, the other wrapped himself in his cloak, and again stretched himself down, saying, 'I marvel, Tressilian, you will feed the lad in this silly humour. If there were aught to draw a judgment upon a virtuous and honourable household like my lord's, renounce me if I think not it were this piping, whining, childish trick of poetry, that came among us with Master Walter Wittypate here and his comrades, twisting into all manner of uncouth and incomprehensible forms of speech the honest, plain English phrase which God gave us to express our meaning withal.'

'Blount believes,' said his comrade, laughing, 'the devil woo'd Eve in rhyme, and that the mystic meaning of the Tree of Knowledge refers solely to the art of clashing rhymes and meting out hexameters.'¹

At this moment the earl's chamberlain entered, and informed Tressilian that his lord required to speak with him.

He found Lord Sussex dressed, but unbraced and lying on his couch, and was shocked at the alteration disease had made in his person. The earl received him with the most friendly cordiality, and inquired into the state of his courtship. Tressilian evaded his inquiries for a moment, and turning his discourse on the earl's own health, he discovered, to his surprise, that the symptoms of his disorder corresponded minutely with those which Wayland had predicated concerning it. He hesitated not, therefore, to communicate to Sussex the whole history of his attendant, and the pretensions he set up to cure the disorder under which he laboured. The earl listened with incredulous attention until the name of Demetrius was mentioned, and then suddenly called to his secretary to bring him a certain casket which contained papers of importance. 'Take out from thence,' he said, 'the declaration of the rascal cook whom we had under examination, and look heedfully if the name of Demetrius be not there mentioned.'

The secretary turned to the passage at once, and read, 'And said declarant, being examined, saith, That he remembers having made the sauce to the said sturgeon fish, after eating of which the said noble lord was taken ill, and he put the usual ingredients and condiments therein, namely —'

'Pass over his trash,' said the earl, 'and see whether he had not been supplied with his materials by a herbalist called Demetrius.'

¹ See Sir Walter Raleigh. Note 7

'It is even so,' answered the secretary 'And he adds, he has not since seen the said Demetrius'

'This accords with thy fellow's story, 'Tressilian,' said the earl, 'call him hither'

On being summoned to the earl's presence, Wayland Smith told his former tale with firmness and consistency

'It may be,' said the earl, 'thou art sent by those who have begun this work, to end it for them, but bethink, if I miscarry under thy medicine, it may go hard with thee'

'That were severe measure,' said Wayland, 'since the issue of medicine, and the end of life, are in God's disposal But I will stand the risk I have not lived so long under ground to be afraid of a grave'

'Nay, if thou be'st so confident,' said the Earl of Sussex, 'I will take the risk too, for the learned can do nothing for me Tell me how this medicine is to be taken'

'That will I do presently,' said Wayland, 'but allow me to condition that, since I incur all the risk of this treatment, no other physician shall be permitted to interfere with it'

'That is but fair,' replied the earl, 'and now prepare your drug'

While Wayland obeyed the earl's commands, his servants, by the artist's direction, addressed their master and placed him in bed

'I warn you,' he said, 'that the first operation of this medicine will be to produce a heavy sleep, during which time the chamber must be kept undisturbed, as the consequences may otherwise be fatal I myself will watch by the earl, with any of the gentlemen of his chamber'

'Let all leave the room save Stanley and this good fellow,' said the earl.

'And saving me also,' said Tressilian 'I too am deeply interested in the effects of this potion'

'Be it so, good friend,' said the earl, 'and now for our experiment, but first call my secretary and chamberlain'

'Bear witness,' he continued, when these officers arrived — 'bear witness for me, gentlemen, that our honourable friend Tressilian is in no way responsible for the effects which this medicine may produce upon me, the taking it being my own free action and choice, in regard I believe it to be a remedy which God has furnished me by unexpected means to recover me of my present malady Commend me to my noble and princely mistress, and say that I live and die her true servant,

and wish to all about her throne the same singleness of heart and will to serve her, with more ability to do so than hath been assigned to poor Thomas Ratchiffe.'

He then folded his hands, and seemed for a second or two absorbed in mental devotion, then took the potion in his hand, and, pausing, regarded Wayland with a look that seemed designed to penetrate his very soul, but which caused no anxiety or hesitation in the countenance or manner of the artist.

'Here is nothing to be feared,' said Sussex to Tressilian, and swallowed the medicine without farther hesitation.

'I am now to pray your lordship,' said Wayland, 'to dispose yourself to rest as commodiously as you can, and of you, gentlemen, to remain as still and mute as if you waited at your mother's death bed.'

The chamberlain and secretary then withdrew, giving orders that all doors be bolted, and all noise in the house strictly prohibited. Several gentlemen were voluntary watchers in the hall, but none remained in the chamber of the sick earl, save his groom of the chamber Stanley, the artist, and Tressilian. Wayland Smith's predictions were speedily accomplished, and a sleep fell upon the earl so deep and sound that they who watched his bedside began to fear that, in his weakened state, he might pass away without awakening from his lethargy. Wayland Smith himself appeared anxious, and felt the temples of the earl slightly from time to time, attending particularly to the state of his respiration, which was full and deep, but at the same time easy and uninterrupted.

CHAPTER XV

You loggerheaded and unpolish'd grooms,
What, no attendance, no regard, no duty?
Where is the foolish knave I sent before?

Taming of the Shrew.

THERE is no period at which men look worse in the eyes of each other, or feel more uncomfortable, than when the first dawn of daylight finds them watchers. Even a beauty of the first order, after the vigils of a ball are interrupted by the dawn, would do wisely to withdraw herself from the gaze of her fondest and most partial admirers. Such was the pale, inauspicious, and ungrateful light which began to beam upon those who kept watch all night in the hall at Say's Court, and which mingled its cold, pale, blue diffusion with the red, yellow, and smoky beams of expiring lamps and torches. The young gallant whom we noticed in our last chapter had left the room for a few minutes, to learn the cause of a knocking at the outward gate, and on his return was so struck with the forlorn and ghastly aspects of his companions of the watch, that he exclaimed, 'Pity of my heart, my masters, how like owls you look! Methinks, when the sun rises, I shall see you flutter off with your eyes dazzled, to stick yourselves into the next ivy-tod or ruined steeple.'

'Hold thy peace, thou gibing fool,' said Blount — 'hold thy peace. Is this a time for jeering, when the manhood of England is perchance dying within a wall's breadth of thee?'

'There thou liest,' replied the gallant

'How, lie!' exclaimed Blount, starting up — 'lie! and to me?'

'Why, so thou didst, thou peevish fool,' answered the youth, 'thou didst lie on that bench even now, didst thou not? But art thou not a hasty coxcomb, to pick up a wry word so wrathfully? Nevertheless, loving and honouring my lord as truly as thou, or any one, I do say that, should Heaven take him from us, all England's manhood dies not with him.'

'Ay,' replied Blount, 'a good portion will survive with thee, doubtless.'

'And a good portion with thyself, Blount, and with stout Markham here, and Tracy, and all of us. But I am he will best employ the talent Heaven has given to us all.'

'As how, I prithee?' said Blount. 'tell us your mystery of multiplying.'

'Why, sirs,' answered the youth, 'ye are like goodly land, which bears no crop because it is not quickened by manure, but I have that rising spirit in me which will make my poor faculties labour to keep pace with it. My ambition will keep my brain at work, I warrant thee.'

'I pray to God it does not drive thee mad,' said Blount, 'for my part, if we lose our noble lord, I bid adieu to the court and to the camp both. I have five hundred foul acres in Norfolk, and thither will I, and change the court pantoufle for the country hobnail.'

'O base transmutation!' exclaimed his antagonist, 'thou hast already got the true rustic slouch. thy shoulders stoop, as if thine hands were at the stils of the plough, and thou hast a kind of earthy smell about thee, instead of being perfumed with essence, as a gallant and courtier should. On my soul, thou hast stolen out to roll thyself on a hay mow! Thy only excuse will be to swear by thy hilt that the farmer had a fair daughter.'

'I pray thee, Walter,' said another of the company, 'cease thy rallery, which suits neither time nor place, and tell us who was at the gate just now.'

'Doctor Masters, physician to her Grace in ordinary, sent by her especial orders to inquire after the earl's health,' answered Walter.

'Ha! what!' exclaimed Tracy, 'that was no slight mark of favour, if the earl can but come through, he will match with Leicester yet. Is Masters with my lord at present?'

'Nay,' replied Walter, 'he is half-way back to Greenwich by this time, and in high dudgeon.'

'Thou didst not refuse him admittance?' exclaimed Tracy.

'Thou wert not, surely, so mad?' ejaculated Blount.

'I refused him admittance as flatly, Blount, as you would refuse a penny to a blind beggar, as obstinately, Tracy, as thou didst ever deny access to a dun.'

'Why, in the fiend's name, didst thou trust him to go to the gate?' said Blount to Tracy.

'It suited his years better than mine,' answered Tracy, 'but he has undone us all now thoroughly. My lord may live or die, he will never have a look of favour from her majesty again.'

'Nor the means of making fortunes for his followers,' said the young gallant, smiling contemptuously, 'there lies the sore point that will brook no handling. My good sirs, I sounded my lamentations over my lord somewhat less loudly than some of you, but when the point comes of doing him service, I will yield to none of you. Had this learned leech entered, think'st thou not there had been such a coil betwixt him and Tressilian's mediciner that not the sleeper only, but the very dead, might have awakened? I know what larum belongs to the discord of doctors.'

'And who is to take the blame of opposing the Queen's orders?' said Tracy, 'for, undeniably, Doctor Masters came with her Grace's positive commands to cure the earl.'

'I, who have done the wrong, will bear the blame,' said Walter

'Thus, then, off fly the dreams of court favour thou hast nourished,' said Blount, 'and despite all thy boasted art and ambition, Devonshire will see thee shine a true younger brother, fit to sit low at the board, carve turn about with the chaplain, look that the hounds be fed, and see the squire's girths drawn when he goes a-hunting.'

'Not so,' said the young man, colouring, 'not while Ireland and the Netherlands have wars, and not while the sea hath pathless waves. The rich West hath lands undreamed of, and Britain contains bold hearts to venture on the quest of them. Adieu for a space, my masters. I go to walk in the court and look to the sentinels.'

'The lad hath quicksilver in his veins, that is certain,' said Blount, looking at Markham.

'He hath that both in brain and blood,' said Markham, 'which may either make or mar him. But, in closing the door against Masters, he hath done a daring and loving piece of service, for Tressilian's fellow hath ever averred that to wake the earl were death, and Masters would wake the Seven Sleepers themselves, if he thought they slept not by the regular ordinance of medicine.'

Morning was well advanced, when Tressilian, fatigued and over-watched, came down to the hall with the joyful intelligence that the earl had awakened of himself, that he found his internal complaints much mitigated, and spoke with a cheerfulness, and

looked round with a vivacity, which of themselves showed a material and favourable change had taken place. Tressilian at the same time commanded the attendance of one or two of his followers, to report what had passed during the night, and to relieve the watchers in the earl's chamber.

When the message of the Queen was communicated to the Earl of Sussex, he at first smiled at the repulse which the physician had received from his zealous young follower, but instantly recollecting himself, he commanded Blount, his master of the horse, instantly to take boat and go down the river to the Palace of Greenwich, taking young Walter and Tracy with him, and make a suitable compliment, expressing his grateful thanks to his sovereign, and mentioning the cause why he had not been enabled to profit by the assistance of the wise and learned Doctor Masters.

'A plague on it,' said Blount, as he descended the stairs, 'had he sent me with a cartel to Leicester, I think I should have done his errand indifferently well. But to go to our gracious sovereign, before whom all words must be lacerated over either with gilding or with sugar, is such a confectionary matter as clean baffles my poor old English brain. Come with me, Tracy, and come you too, Master Walter Wittypate, that art the cause of our having all this ado. Let us see if thy neat brain, that frames so many flashy fireworks, can help out a plain fellow at need with some of thy shrewd devices.'

'Never fear—never fear,' exclaimed the youth, 'it is I will help you through, let me but fetch my cloak.'

'Why, thou hast it on thy shoulders,' said Blount. 'the lad is mazed.'

'No, this is Tracy's old mantle,' answered Walter, 'I go not with thee to court unless as a gentleman should.'

'Why,' said Blount, 'thy braveries are like to dazzle the eyes of none but some poor groom or porter.'

'I know that,' said the youth, 'but I am resolved I will have my own cloak—ay, and brush my doublet to boot—ere I stir forth with you.'

'Well—well,' said Blount, 'here is a coil about a doublet and a cloak, get thyself ready, a God's name!'

They were soon launched on the princely bosom of the broad Thames, upon which the sun now shone forth in all its splendour.

'There are two things scarce matched in the universe,' said Walter to Blount—'the sun in heaven, and the Thames on the earth.'

'The one will light us to Greenwich well enough,' said Blount, 'and the other would take us there a little faster if it were ebb tide.'

'And this is all thou think'st — all thou carest — all thou deem'st the use of the king of elements and the king of rivers, to guide three such poor cariffs as thyself, and me, and Tracy upon an idle journey of courtly ceremony!'

'It is no errand of my seeking, faith,' replied Blount, 'and I could excuse both the sun and the Thames the trouble of carrying me where I have no great mind to go, and where I expect but dog's wages for my trouble, and by my honour,' he added, looking out from the head of the boat, 'it seems to me as if our message were a sort of labour in vain, for see, the Queen's barge lies at the stairs, as if her Majesty were about to take water.'

It was even so. The royal barge, manned with the Queen's watermen, richly attired in the regal liveries, and having the banner of England displayed, did indeed lie at the great stairs which ascended from the river, and along with it two or three other boats for transporting such part of her retinue as were not in immediate attendance on the royal person. The yeomen of the guard, the tallest and most handsome men whom England could produce, guarded with their halberds the passage from the palace gate to the river-side, and all seemed in readiness for the Queen's coming forth, although the day was yet so early.

'By my faith, this bodes us no good,' said Blount. 'it must be some perilous cause puts her Grace in motion thus untimeously. By my counsel, we were best put back again, and tell the earl what we have seen.'

'Tell the earl what we have seen!' said Walter, 'why, what have we seen but a boat, and men with scarlet jerkins, and halberds in their hands? Let us do his errand, and tell him what the Queen says in reply.'

So saying, he caused the boat to be pulled towards a landing-place at some distance from the principal one, which it would not, at that moment, have been thought respectful to approach, and jumped on shore, followed, though with reluctance, by his cautious and timid companions. As they approached the gate of the palace, one of the sergeant porters told them they could not at present enter, as her Majesty was in the act of coming forth. The gentlemen used the name of the Earl of Sussex, but it proved no charm to subdue the officer, who alleged in

reply, that it was as much as his post was worth to disobey in the least tittle the commands which he had received

‘Nay, I told you as much before,’ said Blount, ‘do, I pray you, my dear Walter, let us take boat and return’

‘Not till I see the Queen come forth,’ returned the youth, composedly

‘Thou art mad — stark mad, by the mass!’ answered Blount

‘And thou,’ said Walter, ‘art turned coward of the sudden I have seen thee face half a score of shag-headed Irish kernes to thy own share of them, and now thou wouldst blunk and go back to shun the frown of a fair lady!’

At this moment the gates opened, and ushers began to issue forth in array, preceded and flanked by the band of gentlemen pensioners. After this, amid a crowd of lords and ladies, yet so disposed around her that she could see and be seen on all sides, came Elizabeth herself, then in the prime of womanhood, and in the full glow of what in a sovereign was called beauty, and who would in the lowest rank of life have been truly judged a noble figure, joined to a striking and commanding physiognomy. She leant on the arm of Lord Hunsdon, whose relation to her by her mother’s side often procured him such distinguished marks of Elizabeth’s intimacy

The young cavalier we have so often mentioned had probably never yet approached so near the person of his sovereign, and he pressed forward as far as the line of warders permitted, in order to avail himself of the present opportunity. His companion, on the contrary, cursing his imprudence, kept pulling him backwards, till Walter shook him off impatiently, and letting his rich cloak drop carelessly from one shoulder — a natural action, which served, however, to display to the best advantage his well-proportioned person — unbosoming at the same time, he fixed his eager gaze on the Queen’s approach, with a mixture of respectful curiosity and modest yet ardent admiration, which suited so well with his fine features, that the warders, struck with his rich attire and noble countenance, suffered him to approach the ground over which the Queen was to pass somewhat closer than was permitted to ordinary spectators. Thus the adventurous youth stood full in Elizabeth’s eye — an eye never indifferent to the admiration which she deservedly excited among her subjects, or to the fair proportions of external form which chanced to distinguish any of her courtiers. Accordingly, she fixed her keen glance on the youth, as she approached the place where he stood, with a look

in which surprise at his boldness seemed to be unmingled with resentment, while a trifling accident happened which attracted her attention towards him yet more strongly. The night had been rainy, and, just where the young gentleman stood, a small quantity of mud interrupted the Queen's passage. As she hesitated to pass on, the gallant, throwing his cloak from his shoulders, laid it on the miry spot, so as to ensure her stepping over it dry-shod. Elizabeth looked at the young man, who accompanied this act of devoted courtesy with a profound reverence, and a blush that overspread his whole countenance. The Queen was confused, and blushed in her turn, nodded her head, hastily passed on, and embarked in her barge without saying a word.

'Come along, sir cowcomb,' said Blount: 'your gay cloak will need the brush to-day, I wot. Nay, if you had meant to make a foot-cloth of your mantle, better have kept Tracy's old *diab-de-bure*, which despises all colours.'

'This cloak,' said the youth, taking it up and folding it, 'shall never be brushed while in my possession.'

'And that will not be long, if you learn not a little more economy: we shall have you *in cuerpo* soon, as the Spaniard says.'

Their discourse was here interrupted by one of the band of pensioners.

'I was sent,' said he, after looking at them attentively, 'to a gentleman who hath no cloak, or a muddy one. You, sir, I think,' addressing the younger cavalier, 'are the man, you will please to follow me.'

'He is in attendance on me,' said Blount — 'on me, the noble Earl of Sussex's master of horse.'

'I have nothing to say to that,' answered the messenger, 'my orders are directly from her Majesty, and concern this gentleman only.'

So saying, he walked away, followed by Walter, leaving the others behind, Blount's eyes almost starting from his head with the excess of his astonishment. At length he gave vent to it in an exclamation — 'Who the good jere would have thought this!' And shaking his head with a mysterious air, he walked to his own boat, embarked, and returned to Deptford.

The young cavalier was, in the meanwhile, guided to the water-side by the pensioner, who showed him considerable respect — a circumstance which, to persons in his situation, may

be considered as an augury of no small consequence. He ushered him into one of the wherries which lay ready to attend the Queen's barge, which was already proceeding up the river, with the advantage of that flood-tide of which, in the course of their descent, Blount had complained to his associates.

The two rowers used their oars with such expedition, at the signal of the gentleman pensioner, that they very soon brought their little skiff under the stern of the Queen's boat, where she sate beneath an awning, attended by two or three ladies and the nobles of her household. She looked more than once at the wherry in which the young adventurer was seated, spoke to those around her, and seemed to laugh. At length one of the attendants, by the Queen's order apparently, made a sign for the wherry to come alongside, and the young man was desired to step from his own skiff into the Queen's barge, which he performed with graceful agility at the fore part of the boat, and was brought aft to the Queen's presence, the wherry at the same time dropping into the rear. The youth underwent the gaze of majesty not the less gracefully that his self-possession was mingled with embarrassment. The muddled cloak still hung upon his arm, and formed the natural topic with which the Queen introduced the conversation.

'You have this day spoiled a gay mantle in our behalf, young man. We thank you for your service, though the manner of offering it was unusual, and something bold.'

'In a sovereign's need,' answered the youth, 'it is each liege man's duty to be bold.'

'God's pity! that was well said, my lord,' said the Queen, turning to a grave person who sate by her, and answered with a grave inclination of the head and something of a mumbled assent. 'Well, young man, your gallantry shall not go unrewarded. Go to the wardrobe-keeper, and he shall have orders to supply the suit which you have cast away in our service. Thou shalt have a suit, and that of the newest cut, I promise thee, on the word of a princess.'

'May it please your Grace,' said Walter, hesitating, 'it is not for so humble a servant of your Majesty to measure out your bounties, but if it became me to choose ——'

'Thou wouldst have gold, I warrant me?' said the Queen, interrupting him. 'Fie, young man! I take shame to say that, in our capital, such and so various are the means of thriftless folly, that to give gold to youth is giving fuel to fire,

and furnishing them with the means of self-destruction. If I live and reign, these means of unchristian excess shall be abridged. Yet thou mayest be poor,' she added, 'or thy parents may be. It shall be gold, if thou wilt, but thou shalt answer to me for the use on't.'

Walter waited patiently until the Queen had done, and then modestly assured her that gold was still less in his wish than the raiment her Majesty had before offered.

'How, boy!' said the Queen, 'neither gold nor garment! What is it thou wouldst have of me, then?'

'Only permission, madam — if it is not asking too high an honour — permission to wear the cloak which did you this trifling service.'

'Permission to wear thine own cloak, thou silly boy!' said the Queen.

'It is no longer mine,' said Walter, 'when your Majesty's foot touched it, it became a fit mantle for a prince, but far too rich a one for its former owner.'

The Queen again blushed, and endeavoured to cover, by laughing, a slight degree of not unpleasing surprise and confusion.

'Heard you ever the like, my lords? The youth's head is turned with reading romances. I must know something of him, that I may send him safe to his friends. What art thou?'

'A gentleman of the household of the Earl of Sussex, so please your Grace, sent hither with his master of horse, upon a message to your Majesty.'

In a moment the gracious expression which Elizabeth's face had hitherto maintained gave way to an expression of haughtiness and severity.

'My Lord of Sussex,' she said, 'has taught us how to regard his messages, by the value he places upon ours. We sent but this morning the physician in ordinary of our chamber, and that at no usual time, understanding his lordship's illness to be more dangerous than we had before apprehended. There is at no court in Europe a man more skilled in this holy and most useful science than Doctor Masters, and he came from us to our subject. Nevertheless, he found the gate of Say's Court defended by men with culverins, as if it had been on the Borders of Scotland, not in the vicinity of our court, and when he demanded admittance in our name, it was stubbornly refused. For this slight of a kindness, which had but too

much of condescension in it, we will receive, at present at least, no excuse, and some such we suppose to have been the purport of my Lord of Sussex's message.'

This was uttered in a tone, and with a gesture, which made Lord Sussex's friends who were within hearing tremble. He to whom the speech was addressed, however, trembled not, but with great deference and humility, as soon as the Queen's passion gave him an opportunity, he replied — 'So please your most gracious Majesty, I was charged with no apology from the Earl of Sussex.'

'With what were you then charged, sir?' said the Queen, with the impetuosity which, amid nobler qualities, strongly marked her character, 'was it with a justification? or, God's death! with a defiance?'

'Madam,' said the young man, 'my Lord of Sussex knew the offence approached towards treason, and could think of nothing save of securing the offender, and placing him in your Majesty's hands, and at your mercy. The noble earl was fast asleep when your most gracious message reached him, a potion having been administered to that purpose by his physician, and his lordship knew not of the ungracious repulse your Majesty's royal and most comfortable message had received until after he awoke this morning.'

'And which of his domestics, then, in the name of Heaven, presumed to reject my message, without even admitting my own physician to the presence of him whom I sent him to attend?' said the Queen, much surprised.

'The offender, madam, is before you,' replied Walter, bowing very low. 'the full and sole blame is mine, and my lord has most justly sent me to abide the consequences of a fault of which he is as innocent as a sleeping man's dreams can be of a waking man's actions.'

'What! was it thou? — thou thyself, that repelled my messenger and my physician from Say's Court?' said the Queen. 'What could occasion such boldness in one who seems devoted — that is, whose exterior bearing shows devotion — to his sovereign?'

'Madam,' said the youth, who, notwithstanding an assumed appearance of severity, thought that he saw something in the Queen's face that resembled not implacability, 'we say in our country that the physician is for the time the liege sovereign of his patient. Now, my noble master was then under dominion of a leech, by whose advice he had greatly profited, who had

issued his commands that his patient should not that night be disturbed, on the very peril of his life'

'Thy master hath trusted some false varlet of an empiric,' said the Queen

'I know not, madam, but by the fact that he is now, this very morning, awakened much refreshed and strengthened, from the only sleep he hath had for many hours.'

The robles looked at each other, but more with the purpose to see what each thought of this news than to exchange any remarks on what had happened. The Queen answered hastily, and without affecting to disguise her satisfaction, 'By my word, I am glad he is better. But thou wert over bold to deny the access of my Doctor Masters. Know'st thou not that Holy Writ saith, "In the multitude of counsel there is safety"?''

'Ay, madam,' said Walter, 'but I have heard learned men say that the safety spoken of is for the physicians, not for the patient.'

'By my faith, child, thou hast pushed me home,' said the Queen, laughing, 'for my Hebrew learning does not come quite at a call. How say you, my Lord of Lincoln? Hath the lad given a just interpretation of the text?'

'The word "safety," my most gracious madam,' said the Bishop of Lincoln, 'for so hath been translated, it may be somewhat hastily, the Hebrew word, being ——'

'My lord,' said the Queen, interrupting him, 'we said we had forgotten our Hebrew. But for thee, young man, what is thy name and birth?'

'Raleigh is my name, most gracious Queen — the youngest son of a large but honourable family of Devonshire.'

'Raleigh!' said Elizabeth, after a moment's recollection, 'have we not heard of your service in Ireland?'

'I have been so fortunate as to do some service there, madam,' replied Raleigh, 'scarce, however, of consequence sufficient to reach your Grace's ears.'

'They hear farther than you think of,' said the Queen, graciously, 'and have heard of a youth who defended a ford in Shannon against a whole band of wild Irish rebels, until the stream ran purple with their blood and his own.'

'Some blood I may have lost,' said the youth, looking down, 'but it was where my best is due, and that is in your Majesty's service.'

The Queen paused, and then said hastily, 'You are very young to have fought so well and to speak so well. But you

must not escape your penance for turning back Masters The poor man hath caught cold on the river, for our order reached him when he was just returned from certain visits in London, and he held it matter of loyalty and conscience instantly to set forth again. So hark ye, Master Raleigh, see thou fail not to wear thy muddy cloak, in token of penitence, till our pleasure be farther known. And here,' she added, giving him a jewel of gold in the form of a chessman, 'I give thee this to wear at the collar'

Raleigh, to whom nature had taught intuitively, as it were, those courtly arts which many scarce acquire from long experience, knelt, and, as he took from her hand the jewel, kissed the fingers which gave it. He knew, perhaps, better than almost any of the courtiers who surrounded her, how to mix the devotion claimed by the Queen with the gallantry due to her personal beauty, and in this, his first attempt to unite them, he succeeded so well as at once to gratify Elizabeth's personal vanity and her love of power¹

His master, the Earl of Sussex, had the full advantage of the satisfaction which Raleigh had afforded Elizabeth on their first interview

'My lords and ladies,' said the Queen, looking around to the retinue by whom she was attended, 'methinks, since we are upon the river, it were well to renounce our present purpose of going to the city, and surprise this poor Earl of Sussex with a visit. He is ill, and suffering doubtless under the fear of our displeasure, from which he hath been honestly cleared by the frank avowal of this malapert boy. What think ye? Were it not an act of charity to give him such consolation as the thanks of a queen, much bound to him for his loyal service, may perchance best minister?'

It may be readily supposed that none to whom this speech was addressed ventured to oppose its purport.

'Your Grace,' said the Bishop of Lincoln, 'is the breath of our nostrils' The men of war averred that the face of the sovereign was a whetstone to the soldier's sword, while the men of state were not less of opinion that the light of the Queen's countenance was a lamp to the paths of her councillors, and the ladies agreed with one voice that no noble in England so well deserved the regard of England's royal mistress as the Earl of Sussex — the Earl of Leicester's right being reserved entire, so some of the more politic worded their assent — an exception

¹ See Court Favour of Sir Walter Raleigh Note 8

to which Elizabeth paid no apparent attention. The barge had, therefore, orders to deposit its royal freight at Deptford, at the nearest and most convenient point of communication with Say's Court, in order that the Queen might satisfy her royal and maternal solicitude by making personal inquiries after the health of the Earl of Sussex.

Raleigh, whose acute spirit foresaw and anticipated important consequences from the most trifling events, hastened to ask the Queen's permission to go in the skiff, and announce the royal visit to his master, ingeniously suggesting that the joyful surprise might prove prejudicial to his health, since the richest and most generous cordials may sometimes be fatal to those who have been long in a languishing state.

But whether the Queen deemed it too presumptuous in so young a courtier to interpose his opinion unasked, or whether she was moved by a recurrence of the feeling of jealousy, which had been instilled into her by reports that the earl kept armed men about his person, she desired Raleigh, sharply, to reserve his counsel till it was required of him, and repeated her former orders to be landed at Deptford, adding, 'We will ourselves see what sort of household my Lord of Sussex keeps about him.'

'Now the Lord have pity on us!' said the young courtier to himself. 'Good hearts the earl hath many a one round him, but good heads are scarce with us; and he himself is too ill to give direction. And Blount will be at his morning meal of Yarmouth herrings and ale, and Tracy will have his beastly black puddings and Rhenish, those thorough-paced Welshmen, Thomas ap Rice and Evan Evans, will be at work on their leek porridge and toasted cheese, and she detests, they say, all coarse meats, evil smells, and strong wines. Could they but think of burning some rosemary in the great hall! but *vogue la galère*, all must now be trusted to chance. Luck hath done indifferent well for me this morning, for I trust I have spoiled a cloak and made a court fortune. May she do as much for my gallant patron!'

The royal barge soon stopped at Deptford, and, amid the loud shouts of the populace, which her presence never failed to excite, the Queen, with a canopy borne over her head, walked, accompanied by her retinue, towards Say's Court, where the distant acclamations of the people gave the first notice of her arrival. Sussex, who was in the act of advising with Tressilian how he should make up the supposed breach in the Queen's favour, was infinitely surprised at learning her immediate

approach — not that the Queen's custom of visiting her more distinguished nobility, whether in health or sickness, could be unknown to him, but the suddenness of the communication left no time for those preparations with which he well knew Elizabeth loved to be greeted, and the rudeness and confusion of his military household, much increased by his late illness, rendered him altogether unprepared for her reception.

Cursing internally the chance which thus brought her gracious visitation on him unaware, he hastened down with Tresilian, to whose eventful and interesting story he had just given an attentive ear.

'My worthy friend,' he said, 'such support as I can give your accusation of Varney, you have a right to expect, alike from justice and gratitude. Chance will presently show whether I can do aught with our sovereign, or whether, in very deed, my meddling in your affair may not rather prejudice than serve you.'

Thus spoke Sussex, while hastily casting around him a loose robe of sables, and adjusting his person in the best manner he could to meet the eye of his sovereign. But no hurried attention bestowed on his apparel could remove the ghastly effects of long illness on a countenance which nature had marked with features rather strong than pleasing. Besides, he was of low stature, and, though broad-shouldered, athletic, and fit for martial achievements, his presence in a peaceful hall was not such as ladies love to look upon — a personal disadvantage which was supposed to give Sussex, though esteemed and honoured by his sovereign, considerable disadvantage when compared with Leicester, who was alike remarkable for elegance of manners and for beauty of person.

The earl's utmost despatch only enabled him to meet the Queen as she entered the great hall, and he at once perceived there was a cloud on her brow. Her jealous eye had noticed the martial array of armed gentlemen and retainers with which the mansion-house was filled, and her first words expressed her disapprobation — 'Is this a royal garrison, my Lord of Sussex, that it holds so many pikes and calivers? Or have we by accident overshot Say's Court, and landed at our Tower of London?'

Lord Sussex hastened to offer some apology.

'It needs not,' she said. 'My lord, we intend speedily to take up a certain quarrel between your lordship and another great lord of our household, and at the same time to reprehend

this uncivilised and dangerous practice of surrounding yourselves with armed, and even with ruffianly, followers, as if, in the neighbourhood of our capital, nay, in the very verge of our royal residence, you were preparing to wage civil war with each other. We are glad to see you so well recovered, my lord, though without the assistance of the learned physician whom we sent to you. Urge no excuse, we know how that matter fell out, and we have corrected for it the wild slip, young Raleigh. By the way, my lord, we will speedily relieve your household of him, and take him into our own. Something there is about him which merits to be better nurtured than he is like to be amongst your very military followers.'

To this proposal Sussex, though scarce understanding how the Queen came to make it, could only bow and express his acquiescence. He then entreated her to remain till refreshment could be offered, but in this he could not prevail. And, after a few compliments of a much colder and more commonplace character than might have been expected from a step so decidedly favourable as a personal visit, the Queen took her leave of Say's Court, having brought confusion thither along with her, and leaving doubt and apprehension behind.

CHAPTER XVI

Then call them to our presence Face to face,
And frowning brow to brow, ourselves will hear
The accuser and accused freely speak,
High stomach'd are they both and full of ire,
In rage deaf as the sea, hasty as fire.

Richard II

'I AM ordered to attend court to morrow,' said Leicester, speaking to Varney, 'to meet, as they surmise, my Lord of Sussex. The Queen intends to take up matters betwixt us. This comes of her visit to Say's Court, of which you must needs speak so lightly.'

'I maintain it was nothing,' said Varney, 'nay, I know from a sure intelligencer who was within ear-shot of much that was said, that Sussex has lost rather than gained by that visit. The Queen said, when she stepped into the boat, that Say's Court looked like a guard-house, and smelt like an hospital. "Like a cook's shop in Ram's Alley, rather," said the Countess of Rutland, who is ever your lordship's good friend. And then my Lord of Lincoln must needs put in his holy oar, and say, that my Lord of Sussex must be excused for his rude and old-world housekeeping, since he had as yet no wife.'

'And what said the Queen?' asked Leicester, hastily.

'She took him up roundly,' said Varney, 'and asked what my Lord of Sussex had to do with a wife, or my lord bishop to speak on such a subject. "If marriage is permitted," she said, "I nowhere read that it is enjoined."'

'She likes not marriages, or speech of marriage, among churchmen,' said Leicester.

'Nor among courtiers neither,' said Varney, but, observing that Leicester changed countenance, he instantly added, 'That all the ladies who were present had joined in ridiculing Lord Sussex's housekeeping, and in contrasting it with the reception her Grace would have assuredly received at my Lord of Leicester's.'

'You have gathered much tidings,' said Leicester, 'but you have forgotten or omitted the most important of all. She hath added another to those dangling satellites whom it is her pleasure to keep revolving around her.'

'Your lordship meaneth that Raleigh, the Devonshire youth,' said Varney — 'the Knight of the Cloak, as they call him at court?'

'He may be Knight of the Garter one day, for aught I know,' said Leicester, 'for he advances rapidly. She hath cap'd verses with him, and such fooleries. I would gladly abandon, of my own free will, the part I have in her fickle favour, but I will not be elbowed out of it by the clown Sussex or this new upstart. I hear Tressilian is with Sussex also, and high in his favour. I would spare him for considerations, but he will thrust himself on his fate. Sussex, too, is almost as well as ever in his health.'

'My lord,' replied Varney, 'there will be rubs in the smoothest road, specially when it leads up-hill. Sussex's illness was to us a god-send, from which I hoped much. He has recovered, indeed, but he is not now more formidable than ere he fell ill, when he received more than one foil in wrestling with your lordship. Let not your heart fail you, my lord, and all shall be well.'

'My heart never failed me, sir,' replied Leicester.

'No, my lord,' said Varney, 'but it has betrayed you right often. He that would climb a tree, my lord, must grasp by the branches, not by the blossom.'

'Well — well — well!' said Leicester, impatiently, 'I understand thy meaning. My heart shall neither fail me nor seduce me. Have my retinue in order, see that their array be so splendid as to put down not only the rude companions of Ratcliffe, but the retainers of every other nobleman and courtier. Let them be well armed withal, but without any outward display of their weapons, wearing them as if more for fashion's sake than for use. Do thou thyself keep close to me, I may have business for you.'

The preparations of Sussex and his party were not less anxious than those of Leicester.

'Thy supplication, impeaching Varney of seduction,' said the earl to Tressilian, 'is by this time in the Queen's hand. I have sent it through a sure channel. Methinks your suit should succeed, being, as it is, founded in justice and honour, and Elizabeth being the very muster of both. But, I wot not how, the gipsy (so Sussex was wont to call his rival, on account

of his dark complexion) hath much to say with her in these holiday times of peace. Were war at the gates, I should be one of her whiteboys, but soldiers, like their bucklers and Bilboa blades, get out of fashion in peace time, and satin sleeves and walking rapiers bear the bell. Well, we must be gay, since such is the fashion. Blount, hast thou seen our household put into their new braveries? But thou know'st as little of these toys as I do, thou wouldst be ready enough at disposing a stand of pikes.'

'My good lord,' answered Blount, 'Raleigh hath been here, and taken that charge upon him. Your train will glitter like a May morning. Marry, the cost is another question. One might keep an hospital of old soldiers at the charge of ten modern lackeys.'

'We must not count cost to day, Nicholas,' said the earl in reply. 'I am beholden to Raleigh for his care, I trust, though, he has remembered that I am an old soldier, and would have no more of these follies than needs must.'

'Nay, I understand nought about it,' said Blount, 'but here are your honourable lordship's brave kinsmen and friends coming in by scores to wait upon you to court, where, methinks, we shall bear as brave a front as Leicester, let him ruffle it as he will.'

'Give them the strictest charges,' said Sussex, 'that they suffer no provocation short of actual violence to provoke them into quarrel. They have hot bloods, and I would not give Leicester the advantage over me by any imprudence of theirs.'

The Earl of Sussex ran so hastily through these directions, that it was with difficulty Tressilian at length found opportunity to express his surprise, that he should have proceeded so far in the affair of Sir Hugh Robsart as to lay his petition at once before the Queen. 'It was the opinion of the young lady's friends,' he said, 'that Leicester's sense of justice should be first appealed to, as the offence had been committed by his officer, and so he had expressly told to Sussex.'

'This could have been done without applying to me,' said Sussex, somewhat haughtily. 'I, at least, ought not to have been a counsellor when the object was a humiliating reference to Leicester, and I am surprised that you, Tressilian, a man of honour, and my friend, would assume such a mean course. If you said so, I certainly understood you not in a matter which sounded so unlike yourself.'

'My lord,' said Tressilian, 'the course I would prefer, for

my own sake, is that you have adopted, but the friends of this most unhappy lady ——’

‘Oh, the friends — the friends,’ said Sussex, interrupting him; ‘they must let us manage this cause in the way which seems best. This is the time and the hour to accumulate every charge against Leicester and his household, and yours the Queen will hold a heavy one. But at all events she hath the complaint before her.’

Tressilian could not help suspecting that, in his eagerness to strengthen himself against his rival, Sussex had purposely adopted the course most likely to throw odium on Leicester, without considering minutely whether it were the mode of proceeding most likely to be attended with success. But the step was irrevocable, and Sussex escaped from farther discussing it by dismissing his company with the command, ‘Let all be in order at eleven o’clock, I must be at court and in the presence by high noon precisely.’

While the rival statesmen were thus anxiously preparing for their approaching meeting in the Queen’s presence, even Elizabeth herself was not without apprehension of what might chance from the collision of two such fiery spirits, each backed by a strong and numerous body of followers, and dividing betwixt them, either openly or in secret, the hopes and wishes of most of her court. The band of gentlemen pensioners were all under arms, and a reinforcement of the yeomen of the guard was brought down the Thames from London. A royal proclamation was sent forth, strictly prohibiting nobles, of whatever degree, to approach the palace with retainers or followers, armed with short or with long weapons, and it was even whispered that the high sheriff of Kent had secret instructions to have a part of the array of the county ready on the shortest notice.

The eventful hour, thus anxiously prepared for on all sides, at length approached, and, each followed by his long and glittering train of friends and followers, the rival earls entered the palace-yard of Greenwich at noon precisely.

As if by previous arrangement, or perhaps by intimation that such was the Queen’s pleasure, Sussex and his retinue came to the palace from Deptford by water, while Leicester arrived by land, and thus they entered the courtyard from opposite sides. This trifling circumstance gave Leicester a certain ascendancy in the opinion of the vulgar, the appearance of his

cavalcade of mounted followers showing more numerous and more imposing than those of Sussex's party, who were necessarily upon foot. No show or sign of greeting passed between the earls, though each looked full at the other, both expecting, perhaps, an exchange of courtesies, which neither was willing to commence. Almost in the minute of their arrival the castle bell tolled, the gates of the palace were opened, and the earls entered, each numerously attended by such gentlemen of their train whose rank gave them that privilege. The yeomen and inferior attendants remained in the courtyard, where the opposite parties eyed each other with looks of eager hatred and scorn, as if waiting with impatience for some cause of tumult, or some apology for mutual aggression. But they were restrained by the strict commands of their leaders, and overawed, perhaps, by the presence of an armed guard of unusual strength.

In the meanwhile, the more distinguished persons of each train followed their patrons into the lofty halls and ante-chambers of the royal palace, flowing on in the same current, like two streams which are compelled into the same channel, yet shun to mix their waters. The parties arranged themselves, as it were instinctively, on the different sides of the lofty apartment, and seemed eager to escape from the transient union which the narrowness of the crowded entrance had for an instant compelled them to submit to. The folding-doors at the upper end of the long gallery were immediately afterwards opened, and it was announced in a whisper that the Queen was in her presence-chamber, to which these gave access. Both earls moved slowly and stately towards the entrance — Sussex followed by Tressilian, Blount, and Raleigh, and Leicester by Varney. The pride of Leicester was obliged to give way to court forms, and, with a grave and formal inclination of the head, he paused until his rival, a peer of older creation than his own, passed before him. Sussex returned the reverence with the same formal civility, and entered the presence-room. Tressilian and Blount offered to follow him, but were not permitted, the Usher of the Black Rod alleging in excuse, that he had precise orders to look to all admissions that day. To Raleigh, who stood back on the impulse of his companions, he said, 'You, sir, may enter,' and he entered accordingly.

'Follow me close, Varney,' said the Earl of Leicester, who had stood aloof for a moment to mark the reception of Sussex, and, advancing to the entrance, he was about to pass on, when

Varney, who was close behind him, dressed out in the utmost bravery of the day, was stopped by the usher, as Tressilian and Blount had been before him. 'How is this, Master Bowyer?' said the Earl of Leicester. 'Know you who I am, and that this is my friend and follower?'

'Your lordship will pardon me,' replied Bowyer, stoutly, 'my orders are precise, and limit me to a strict discharge of my duty.'

'Thou art a partial knave,' said Leicester, the blood mounting to his face, 'to do me this dishonour, when you but now admitted a follower of my Lord of Sussex.'

'My lord,' said Bowyer, 'Master Raleigh is newly admitted a sworn servant of her Grace, and to him my orders did not apply.'

'Thou art a knave—an ungrateful knave,' said Leicester, 'but he that hath done can undo thou shalt not prank thee in thy authority long!'

This threat he uttered aloud, with less than his usual policy and discretion, and having done so, he entered the presence-chamber, and made his reverence to the Queen, who, attired with even more than her usual splendour, and surrounded by those nobles and statesmen whose courage and wisdom have rendered her reign immortal, stood ready to receive the homage of her subjects. She graciously returned the obeisance of the favourite earl, and looked alternately at him and at Sussex, as if about to speak, when Bowyer, a man whose spirit could not brook the insult he had so openly received from Leicester, in the discharge of his office, advanced with his black rod in his hand, and knelt down before her.

'Why, how now, Bowyer?' said Elizabeth, 'thy courtesy seems strangely timed!'

'My hege sovereign,' he said, while every courtier around trembled at his audacity, 'I come but to ask whether, in the discharge of my office, I am to obey your Highness' commands or those of the Earl of Leicester, who has publicly menaced me with his displeasure, and treated me with disparaging terms, because I denied entry to one of his followers, in obedience to your Grace's precise orders?'

The spirit of Henry VIII was instantly aroused in the bosom of his daughter, and she turned on Leicester with a severity which appalled him, as well as all his followers.

'God's death! my lord,' such was her emphatic phrase, 'what means this? We have thought well of you, and brought

you near to our person, but it was not that you might hide the sun from our faithful subjects. Who gave you license to contradict our orders or control our officers? I will have in this court, ay, and in this realm, but one mistress, and no master. Look to it that Master Bowyer sustains no harm for his duty to me faithfully discharged, for, as I am Christian woman and crowned queen, I will hold you dearly answerable. Go, Bowyer, you have done the part of an honest man and a true subject. We will brook no mayor of the palace here.'

Bowyer kissed the hand which she extended towards him, and withdrew to his post, astonished at the success of his own audacity. A smile of triumph pervaded the faction of Sussex, that of Leicester seemed proportionally dismayed, and the favourite himself, assuming an aspect of the deepest humility, did not even attempt a word in his own exculpation.

He acted wisely, for it was the policy of Elizabeth to humble, not to disgrace him, and it was prudent to suffer her, without opposition or reply, to glory in the exertion of her authority. The dignity of the Queen was gratified, and the woman began soon to feel for the mortification which she had imposed on her favourite. Her keen eye also observed the secret looks of congratulation exchanged amongst those who favoured Sussex, and it was no part of her policy to give either party a decisive triumph.

'What I say to my Lord of Leicester,' she said, after a moment's pause, 'I say also to you, my Lord of Sussex. You also must needs ruffle in the court of England, at the head of a faction of your own?'

'My followers, gracious princess,' said Sussex, 'have indeed ruffled in your cause in Ireland, in Scotland, and against yonder rebellious earls in the north. I am ignorant that——'

'Do you bandy looks and words with me, my lord?' said the Queen, interrupting him, 'methinks you might learn of my Lord of Leicester the modesty to be silent, at least, under our censure. I say, my lord, that my grandfather and father, in their wisdom, debarred the nobles of this civilised land from travelling with such disorderly retinues, and think you that, because I wear a coif, their sceptre has in my hand been changed into a distaff? I tell you, no king in Christendom will less brook his court to be cumbered, his people oppressed, and his kingdom's peace disturbed, by the arrogance of overgrown power, than she who now speaks with you. My Lord of Leicester, and you, my Lord of Sussex, I command you both to

be friends with each other, or, by the crown I wear, you shall find an enemy who will be too strong for both of you !

‘Madam,’ said the Earl of Leicester, ‘you, who are yourself the fountain of honour, know best what is due to mine. I place it at your disposal, and only say, that the terms on which I have stood with my Lord of Sussex have not been of my seeking, nor had he cause to think me his enemy until he had done me gross wrong.’

‘For me, madam,’ said the Earl of Sussex, ‘I cannot appeal from your sovereign pleasure, but I were well content my Lord of Leicester should say in what I have, as he terms it, wronged him, since my tongue never spoke the word that I would not willingly justify either on foot or horseback.’

‘And for me,’ said Leicester, ‘always under my gracious sovereign’s pleasure, my hand shall be as ready to make good my words as that of any man who ever wrote himself Ratchliffe.’

‘My lords,’ said the Queen, ‘these are no terms for this presence, and if you cannot keep your temper, we will find means to keep both that and you close enough. Let me see you join hands, my lords, and forget your idle animosities.’

The two rivals looked at each other with reluctant eyes, each unwilling to make the first advance to execute the Queen’s will.

‘Sussex,’ said Elizabeth, ‘I entreat — Leicester, I command you.’

Yet, so were her words accented, that the entreaty sounded like command and the command like entreaty. They remained still and stubborn, until she raised her voice to a height which argued at once impatience and absolute command.

‘Sir Henry Lee,’ she said to an officer in attendance, ‘have a guard in present readiness, and man a barge instantly. My Lords of Sussex and Leicester, I bid you once more to join hands — and, God’s death ! he that refuses shall taste of our Tower fare ere he see our face again. I will lower your proud hearts ere we part, and that I promise, on the word of a queen !’

‘The prison,’ said Leicester, ‘might be borne, but to lose your Grace’s presence were to lose light and life at once. Here, Sussex, is my hand.’

‘And here,’ said Sussex, ‘is mine in truth and honesty, but —’

‘Nay, under favour, you shall add no more,’ said the Queen. ‘Why, this is as it should be,’ she added, looking on them more favourably, ‘and when you, the shepherds of the people, unite

to protect them, it shall be well with the flock we rule over. For, my lords, I tell you plainly, your follies and your brawls lead to strange disorders among your servants. My Lord of Leicester, you have a gentleman in your household called Varney ?

‘Yes, gracious madam,’ replied Leicester, ‘I presented him to kiss your royal hand when you were last at Nonsuch.’

‘His outside was well enough,’ said the Queen, ‘but scarce so fair, I should have thought, as to have caused a maiden of honourable birth and hopes to barter her fame for his good looks, and become his paramour. Yet so it is this fellow of yours hath seduced the daughter of a good old Devonshire knight, Sir Hugh Robsart of Ladcote Hall, and she hath fled with him from her father’s house like a castaway. My Lord of Leicester, are you ill, that you look so deadly pale ?’

‘No, gracious madam,’ said Leicester, and it required every effort he could make to bring forth these few words.

‘You are surely ill, my lord ?’ said Elizabeth, going towards him with hasty speech and hurried step, which indicated the deepest concern. ‘Call Masters — call our surgeon in ordinary. Where be these loitering fools ? We lose the pride of our court through their negligence. Or is it possible, Leicester,’ she continued, looking on him with a very gentle aspect — ‘can fear of my displeasure have wrought so deeply on thee ? Doubt not for a moment, noble Dudley, that we could blame *thee* for the folly of thy retainer — thee, whose thoughts we know to be far otherwise employed ! He that would climb the eagle’s nest, my lord, cares not who are catching linnets at the foot of the precipice.’

‘Mark you that ?’ said Sussex, aside to Raleigh. ‘The devil aids him surely ! for all that would sink another ten fathom deep seems but to make him float the more easily. Had a follower of mine acted thus —’

‘Peace, my good lord,’ said Raleigh — ‘for God’s sake, peace ! Wait the change of the tide, it is even now on the turn.’

The acute observation of Raleigh, perhaps, did not deceive him, for Leicester’s confusion was so great, and, indeed, for the moment, so irresistibly overwhelming, that Elizabeth, after looking at him with a wondering eye, and receiving no intelligible answer to the unusual expressions of grace and affection which had escaped from her, shot her quick glance around the circle of courtiers, and reading, perhaps, in their faces something that accorded with her own awakened sus-

picions, she said suddenly, 'Or is there more in this than we see, or than you, my lord, wish that we should see? Where is this Varney? Who saw him?'

'An it please your Grace,' said Bowyer, 'it is the same against whom I this instant closed the door of the presence-room.'

'An it please me!' repeated Elizabeth, sharply, not at that moment in the humour of being pleased with anything. 'It does *not* please me that he should pass saucily into my presence, or that you should exclude from it one who came to justify himself from an accusation.'

'May it please you,' answered the perplexed usher, 'if I knew, in such case, how to bear myself, I would take heed——'

'You should have reported the fellow's desire to us, Master Usher, and taken our directions. You think yourself a great man, because but now we chid a nobleman on your account; yet, after all, we hold you but as the lead-weight that keeps the door fast. Call this Varney hither instantly, there is one Tressilian also mentioned in this petition, let them both come before us.'

She was obeyed, and Tressilian and Varney appeared accordingly. Varney's first glance was at Leicester, his second at the Queen. In the looks of the latter there appeared an approaching storm, and in the downcast countenance of his patron he could read no directions in what way he was to trim his vessel for the encounter, he then saw Tressilian, and at once perceived the peril of the situation in which he was placed. But Varney was as bold-faced and ready-witted as he was cunning and unscrupulous—a skilful pilot in extremity, and fully conscious of the advantages which he would obtain, could he extricate Leicester from his present peril, and of the ruin that yawned for himself should he fail in doing so.

'Is it true, sirrah,' said the Queen, with one of those searching looks which few had the audacity to resist, 'that you have seduced to infamy a young lady of birth and breeding, the daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Lidcote Hall?'

Varney kneeled down, and replied with a look of the most profound contrition—'There had been some love passages betwixt him and Mistress Amy Robsart.'

Leicester's flesh quivered with indignation as he heard his dependant make this avowal, and for one moment he manned himself to step forward, and, bidding farewell to the court and the royal favour, confess the whole mystery of the secret

marriage But he looked at Sussex, and the idea of the triumphant smile which would clothe his cheek upon hearing the avowal sealed his lips. 'Not now, at least,' he thought, 'or in this presence, will I afford him so rich a triumph.' And pressing his lips close together, he stood firm and collected, attentive to each word which Varney uttered, and determined to hide to the last the secret on which his court favour seemed to depend. Meanwhile, the Queen proceeded in her examination of Varney

'Love passages!' said she, echoing his last words, 'what passages, thou knave? and why not ask the wench's hand from her father, if thou hadst any honesty in thy love for her?'

'An it please your Grace,' said Varney, still on his knees, 'I dared not do so, for her father had promised her hand to a gentleman of birth and honour—I will do him justice, though I know he bears me ill-will—one Master Edmund Tressilian, whom I now see in the presence.'

'Soh!' replied the Queen, 'and what was your right to make the simple fool break her worthy father's contract, through your love *passages*, as your conceit and assurance term them?'

'Madam,' replied Varney, 'it is in vain to plead the cause of human frailty before a judge to whom it is unknown, or that of love to one who never yields to the passion——' he paused an instant, and then added, in a very low and timid tone—'which she inflicts upon all others'

Elizabeth tried to frown; but smiled in her own despite, as she answered, 'Thou art a marvellously impudent knave. Art thou married to the girl?'

Leicester's feelings became so complicated and so painfully intense, that it seemed to him as if his life was to depend on the answer made by Varney, who, after a moment's real hesitation, answered, 'Yes.'

'Thou false villain!' said Leicester, bursting forth into rage, yet unable to add another word to the sentence, which he had begun with such emphatic passion

'Nay, my lord,' said the Queen, 'we will, by your leave, stand between this fellow and your anger. We have not yet done with him. Knew your master, my Lord of Leicester, of this fair work of yours? Speak truth, I command thee, and I will be thy warrant from danger on every quarter'

'Gracious madam,' said Varney, 'to speak Heaven's truth, my lord was the cause of the whole matter'

'Thou villain, wouldst thou betray me?' said Leicester

'Speak on,' said the Queen, hastily, her cheek colouring and her eyes sparkling as she addressed Varney — 'speak on, here no commands are heard but mine'

'They are omnipotent, gracious madam,' replied Varney; 'and to you there can be no secrets. Yet I would not,' he added, looking around him, 'speak of my master's concerns to other ears.'

'Fall back, my lords,' said the Queen to those who surrounded her, 'and do you speak on. What hath the earl to do with this guilty intrigue of thine? See, fellow, that thou beliest him not!'

'Far be it from me to traduce my noble patron,' replied Varney, 'yet I am compelled to own that some deep, overwhelming, yet secret feeling hath of late dwelt in my lord's mind, hath abstracted him from the cares of the household, which he was wont to govern with such religious strictness, and hath left us opportunities to do follies, of which the shame, as in this case, partly falls upon our patron. Without this, I had not had means or leisure to commit the folly which has drawn on me his displeasure, the heaviest to endure by me which I could by any means incur — saving always the yet more dreaded resentment of your Grace'

'And in this sense, and no other, hath he been accessory to thy fault?' said Elizabeth

'Surely, madam, in no other,' replied Varney, 'but, since somewhat hath chanced to him, he can scarce be called his own man. Look at him, madam, how pale and trembling he stands — how unlike his usual majesty of manner, yet what has he to fear from aught I can say to your Highness? Ah! madam, since he received that fatal packet!'

'What packet, and from whence?' said the Queen, eagerly

'From whence, madam, I cannot guess, but I am so near to his person that I know he has ever since worn, suspended around his neck and next to his heart, that lock of hair which sustains a small golden jewel shaped like a heart. He speaks to it when alone, he parts not from it when he sleeps. No heathen ever worshipped an idol with such devotion'

'Thou art a prying knave to watch thy master so closely,' said Elizabeth, blushing, but not with anger, 'and a tattling knave to tell over again his fooleries. What colour might the braid of hair be that thou pratest of?'

Varney replied, 'A poet, madam, might call it a thread

from the golden web wrought by Minerva, but, to my thinking, it was paler than even the purest gold—more like the last parting sunbeam of the softest day of spring’

‘Why, you are a poet yourself, Master Varney,’ said the Queen, smiling, ‘but I have not genius quick enough to follow your rare metaphors. Look round these ladies—is there (she hesitated, and endeavoured to assume an air of great indifference)—is there here, in this presence, any lady, the colour of whose hair reminds thee of that braid? Methinks, without prying into my Lord of Leicester’s amorous secrets, I would fain know what kind of locks are like the thread of Minerva’s web, or the—what was it?—the last rays of the May-day sun’

Varney looked round the presence-chamber, his eye travelling from one lady to another, until at length it rested upon the Queen herself, but with an aspect of the deepest veneration. ‘I see no tresses,’ he said, ‘in this presence, worthy of such smiles, unless where I dare not look on them’

‘How, sir knave,’ said the Queen, ‘dare you intimate——’

‘Nay, madam,’ replied Varney, shading his eyes with his hand, ‘it was the beams of the May-day sun that dazzled my weak eyes’

‘Go to—go to,’ said the Queen, ‘thou art a foolish fellow,’ and turning quickly from him, she walked up to Leicester

Intense curiosity, mingled with all the various hopes, fears, and passions which influence court faction, had occupied the presence chamber during the Queen’s conference with Varney, as if with the strength of an Eastern talisman. Men suspended every, even the slightest, external motion, and would have ceased to breathe, had nature permitted such an intermission of her functions. The atmosphere was contagious, and Leicester, who saw all around wishing or fearing his advancement or his fall, forgot all that love had previously dictated, and saw nothing for the instant but the favour or disgrace which depended on the nod of Elizabeth and the fidelity of Varney. He summoned himself hastily, and prepared to play his part in the scene which was like to ensue, when, as he judged from the glances which the Queen threw towards him, Varney’s communications, be they what they might, were operating in his favour. Elizabeth did not long leave him in doubt, for the more than favour with which she accosted him decided his triumph in the eyes of his rival, and of the assembled court of England. ‘Thou hast a prating servant of this same Varney,

my lord,' she said, 'it is lucky you trust him with nothing that can hurt you in our opinion, for, believe me, he would keep no counsel'

'From your Highness,' said Leicester, dropping gracefully on one knee, 'it were treason he should I would that my heart itself lay before you, barer than the tongue of any servant could strip it'

'What, my lord,' said Elizabeth, looking kindly upon him, 'is there no one little corner over which you would wish to spread a veil? Ah! I see you are confused at the question, and your Queen knows she should not look too deeply into her servants' motives for their faithful duty, lest she see what might, or at least ought to, displease her'

Relieved by these last words, Leicester broke out into a torrent of expressions of deep and passionate attachment, which perhaps, at that moment, were not altogether fictitious. The mingled emotions which had at first overcome him, had now given way to the energetic vigour with which he had determined to support his place in the Queen's favour, and never did he seem to Elizabeth more eloquent, more handsome, more interesting, than while, kneeling at her feet, he conjured her to strip him of all his power, but to leave him the name of her servant. 'Take from the poor Dudley,' he exclaimed, 'all that your bounty has made him, and bid him be the poor gentleman he was when your Grace first shone on him, leave him no more than his cloak and his sword, but let him still boast he has — what in word or deed he never forfeited — the regard of his adored Queen and mistress!'

'No, Dudley!' said Elizabeth, raising him with one hand, while she extended the other that he might kiss it, 'Elizabeth hath not forgotten that, whilst you were a poor gentleman, despoiled of your hereditary rank, she was as poor a princess, and that in her cause you then ventured all that oppression had left you — your life and honour. Rise, my lord, and let my hand go. Rise, and be what you have ever been, the grace of our court and the support of our throne. Your mistress may be forced to chide your misdemeanours, but never without owning your merits. And so help me God,' she added, turning to the audience, who, with various feelings, witnessed this interesting scene — 'so help me God, gentlemen, as I think never sovereign had a truer servant than I have in this noble earl!'

A murmur of assent rose from the Leicesterian faction, which

the friends of Sussex dared not oppose. They remained with their eyes fixed on the ground, dismayed as well as mortified by the public and absolute triumph of their opponents. Leicester's first use of the familiarity to which the Queen had so publicly restored him was to ask her commands concerning Varney's offence. 'Although,' he said, 'the fellow deserves nothing from me but displeasure, yet, might I presume to intercede——'

'In truth, we had forgotten his matter,' said the Queen, 'and it was ill done of us, who owe justice to our meanest as well as to our highest subject. We are pleased, my lord, that you were the first to recall the matter to our memory. Where is Tressilian, the accuser? let him come before us.'

Tressilian appeared, and made a low and befitting reverence. His person, as we have elsewhere observed, had an air of grace, and even of nobleness, which did not escape Queen Elizabeth's critical observation. She looked at him with attention, as he stood before her unabashed, but with an air of the deepest dejection.

'I cannot but grieve for this gentleman,' she said to Leicester. 'I have inquired concerning him, and his presence confirms what I heard, that he is a scholar and a soldier, well accomplished both in arts and arms. We women, my lord, are fanciful in our choice. I had said now, to judge by the eye, there was no comparison to be held betwixt your follower and this gentleman. But Varney is a well-spoken fellow, and, to say truth, that goes far with us of the weaker sex. Look you, Master Tressilian, a bolt lost is not a bow broken. Your true affection, as I will hold it to be, hath been, it seems, but ill requited, but you have scholarship, and you know there have been false Cressidas to be found, from the Trojan war downward. Forget, good sir, this lady light o' love, teach your affection to see with a wiser eye. Thus we say to you more from the writings of learned men than our own knowledge, being, as we are, far removed by station and will from the enlargement of experience in such idle toys of humorous passion. For this dame's father, we can make his grief the less by advancing his son-in-law to such station as may enable him to give an honourable support to his bride. Thou shalt not be forgotten thyself, Tressilian, follow our court, and thou shalt see that a true Troilus hath some claim in our grace. Think of what that arch-knave Shakspeare says—a plague on him, his toys come into my head when I should think of other matter! Stay, how goes it?—

Cressid was yours, tied with the bonds of heaven ;
 These bonds of heaven are slipt, dissolved, and loosed,
 And with another knot five fingers tied,
 The fragments of her faith are bound to Diomed

You smile, my lord of Southampton ! Perchance I make your player's verse halt through my bad memory, but let it suffice let there be no more of this mad matter'

And as Tressilian kept the posture of one who would willingly be heard, though, at the same time, expressive of the deepest reverence, the Queen added with some impatience — 'What would the man have ? The wench cannot wed both of you ? She has made her election — not a wise one perchance, but she is Varney's wedded wife'

'My suit should sleep there, most gracious sovereign,' said Tressilian, 'and with my suit my revenge. But I hold this Varney's word no good warrant for the truth'

'Had that doubt been elsewhere urged,' answered Varney, 'my sword —'

'*Thy sword !*' interrupted Tressilian, scornfully, 'with her Grace's leave, my sword shall show —'

'Peace, you knaves — both !' said the Queen, 'know you where you are ? This comes of your feuds, my lords,' she added, looking towards Leicester and Sussex 'your followers catch your own humour, and must bandy and brawl in my court and in my very presence, like so many Matamoros. Look you, sirs, he that speaks of drawing swords in any other quarrel than mine or England's, by mine honour, I'll bracelet him with iron both on wrist and ankle !' She then paused a minute, and resumed in a milder tone, 'I must do justice betwixt the bold and mutinous knaves notwithstanding. My Lord of Leicester, will you warrant with your honour — that is, to the best of your belief — that your servant speaks truth in saying he hath married this Amy Robsart ?'

This was a home-thrust, and had nearly staggered Leicester. But he had now gone too far to recede, and answered, after a moment's hesitation, 'To the best of my belief — indeed, on my certain knowledge — she is a wedded wife'

'Gracious madam,' said Tressilian, 'may I yet request to know when, and under what circumstances, this alleged marriage —'

'Out, sirrah,' answered the Queen — '*alleged marriage !* Have you not the word of this illustrious earl to warrant the truth of what his servant says ? But thou art a loser — think'st thyself

such at least — and thou shalt have indulgence, we will look into the matter ourself more at leisure. My Lord of Leicester, I trust you remember we mean to taste the good cheer of your Castle of Kenilworth on this week ensuing, we will pray you to bid our good and valued friend the Earl of Sussex to hold company with us there.'

'If the noble Earl of Sussex,' said Leicester, bowing to his rival with the easiest and with the most graceful courtesy, 'will so far honour my poor house, I will hold it an additional proof of the amicable regard it is your Grace's desire we should entertain towards each other.'

Sussex was more embarrassed. 'I should,' said he, 'madam, be but a clog on your gayer hours, since my late severe illness.'

'And have you been indeed so very ill?' said Elizabeth, looking on him with more attention than before, 'you are in faith strangely altered, and deeply am I grieved to see it. But be of good cheer, we will ourselves look after the health of so valued a servant, and to whom we owe so much. Masters shall order your diet, and that we ourselves may see that he is obeyed, you must attend us in this progress to Kenilworth.'

This was said so peremptorily, and at the same time with so much kindness, that Sussex, however unwilling to become the guest of his rival, had no resource but to bow low to the Queen in obedience to her commands, and to express to Leicester, with blunt courtesy, though mingled with embarrassment, his acceptance of his invitation. As the earls exchanged compliments on the occasion, the Queen said to her high treasurer, 'Methinks, my lord, the countenances of these our two noble peers resemble those of the two famed classic streams, the one so dark and sad, the other so fair and noble. My old Master Ascham would have chid me for forgetting the author. It is Cæsar, as I think. See what majestic calmness sits on the brow of the noble Leicester, while Sussex seems to greet him as if he did our will indeed, but not willingly.'

'The doubt of your Majesty's favour,' answered the lord treasurer, 'may perchance occasion the difference, which does not — as what does? — escape your Grace's eye.'

'Such doubt were injurious to us, my lord,' replied the Queen. 'We hold both to be near and dear to us, and will with impartiality employ both in honourable service for the weal of our kingdom. But we will break up their farther conference at present. My Lords of Sussex and Leicester, we have a word more with you. Tressilian and Varney are near your

persons, you will see that they attend you at Kenilworth. And as we shall then have both Paris and Menelaus within our call, so we will have the same fair Helen also whose fickleness has caused this broil. Varney, thy wife must be at Kenilworth, and forthcoming at my order. My Lord of Leicester, we expect you will look to this.'

The earl and his follower bowed low, and raised their heads, without daring to look at the Queen or at each other, for both felt at the instant as if the nets and toils which their own falsehood had woven were in the act of closing around them. The Queen, however, observed not their confusion, but proceeded to say, 'My Lords of Sussex and Leicester, we require your presence at the privy council to be presently held, where matters of importance are to be debated. We will then take the water for our divertisement, and you, my lords, will attend us. And that reminds us of a circumstance. Do you, Sir Squire of the Soiled Cassock (distinguishing Raleigh by a smile), fail not to observe that you are to attend us on our progress. You shall be supplied with suitable means to reform your wardrobe.'

And so terminated this celebrated audience, in which, as throughout her life, Elizabeth united the occasional caprice of her sex with that sense and sound policy in which neither man nor woman ever excelled her.

CHAPTER XVII

Well, then — our course is chosen, spread the sail,
Heave oft the lead and mark the soundings well,
Look to the helm, good master, many a shoal
Marks this stern coast, and rocks, where sits the Siren,
Who, like ambition, lures men to their ruin

The Shipwreck

DURING the brief interval that took place betwixt the dismissal of the audience and the sitting of the privy council, Leicester had time to reflect that he had that morning sealed his own fate. 'It was impossible for him now,' he thought, 'after having, in the face of all that was honourable in England, pledged his truth (though in an ambiguous phrase) for the statement of Varney, to contradict or disavow it without exposing himself not merely to the loss of court favour, but to the highest displeasure of the Queen, his deceived mistress, and to the scorn and contempt at once of his rival and of all his compeers.' This certainty rushed at once on his mind, together with all the difficulties which he would necessarily be exposed to in preserving a secret which seemed now equally essential to his safety, to his power, and to his honour. He was situated like one who walks upon ice, ready to give way around him, and whose only safety consists in moving onwards by firm and unvacillating steps. The Queen's favour, to preserve which he had made such sacrifices, must now be secured by all means and at all hazards — it was the only plank which he could cling to in the tempest. He must settle himself, therefore, to the task of not only preserving, but augmenting, the Queen's partiality. He must be the favourite of Elizabeth, or a man utterly shipwrecked in fortune and in honour. All other considerations must be laid aside for the moment, and he repelled the intrusive thoughts which forced on his mind the image of Amy, by saying to himself, there would be time to think hereafter how he was to escape from the labyrinth ultra-

mately, since the pilot who sees a Scylla under his bows must not for the time think of the more distant dangers of Charybdis.

In this mood, the Earl of Leicester that day assumed his chair at the council-table of Elizabeth, and when the hours of business were over, in this same mood did he occupy an honoured place near her during her pleasure-excursion on the Thames. And never did he display to more advantage his powers as a politician of the first rank, or his parts as an accomplished courtier.

It chanced that in that day's council matters were agitated touching the affairs of the unfortunate Mary, the seventh year of whose captivity in England was now in doleful currency. There had been opinions in favour of this unhappy princess laid before Elizabeth's council, and supported with much strength of argument by Sussex and others, who dwelt more upon the law of nations and the breach of hospitality than, however softened or qualified, was agreeable to the Queen's ear. Leicester adopted the contrary opinion with great animation and eloquence, and described the necessity of continuing the severe restraint of the Queen of Scots, as a measure essential to the safety of the kingdom, and particularly of Elizabeth's sacred person, the lightest hair of whose head, he maintained, ought, in their lordships' estimation, to be matter of more deep and anxious concern than the life and fortunes of a rival, who, after setting up a vain and unjust pretence to the throne of England, was now, even while in the bosom of her country, the constant hope and theme of encouragement to all enemies to Elizabeth, whether at home or abroad. He ended by craving pardon of their lordships if, in the zeal of speech, he had given any offence, but the Queen's safety was a theme which hurried him beyond his usual moderation of debate.

Elizabeth chid him, but not severely, for the weight which he attached unduly to her personal interests, yet she owned that, since it had been the pleasure of Heaven to combine those interests with the weal of her subjects, she did only her duty when she adopted such measures of self-preservation as circumstances forced upon her, and if the council in their wisdom should be of opinion that it was needful to continue some restraint on the person of her unhappy sister of Scotland, she trusted they would not blame her if she requested of the Countess of Shrewsbury to use her with as much kindness as might be consistent with her safe keeping. And with this intimation of her pleasure, the council was dismissed.

Never was more anxious and ready way made for 'my Lord of Leicester' than as he passed through the crowded ante-rooms to go towards the river-side, in order to attend her Majesty to her barge, never was the voice of the ushers louder, to 'Make room — make room for the noble earl', never were these signals more promptly and reverentially obeyed, never were more anxious eyes turned on him to obtain a glance of favour, or even of mere recognition, while the heart of many a humble follower throbbed betwixt the desire to offer his congratulations and the fear of intruding himself on the notice of one so infinitely above him. The whole court considered the issue of this day's audience, expected with so much doubt and anxiety, as a decisive triumph on the part of Leicester, and felt assured that the orb of his rival satellite, if not altogether obscured by his lustre, must revolve hereafter in a dimmer and more distant sphere. So thought the court and courtiers, from high to low, and they acted accordingly.

On the other hand, never did Leicester return the general greeting with such ready and condescending courtesy, or endeavour more successfully to gather, in the words of one who at that moment stood at no great distance from him, 'golden opinions from all sorts of men.'

For all the favourite earl had a bow, a smile at least, and often a kind word. Most of these were addressed to courtiers, whose names have long gone down the tide of oblivion, but some to such as sound strangely in our ears, when connected with the ordinary matters of human life, above which the gratitude of posterity has long elevated them. A few of Leicester's interlocutory sentences ran as follows.

'Poynings, good morrow, and how does your wife and fair daughter? Why come they not to court? Adams, your suit is naught the Queen will grant no more monopolies, but I may serve you in another matter. My good Alderman Aylford, the suit of the city, affecting Queenhithe, shall be forwarded as far as my poor interest can serve. Master Edmund Spenser, touching your Irish petition, I would willingly aid you, from my love to the Muses, but thou hast nettled the lord treasurer.'

'My lord,' said the poet, 'were I permitted to explain —'

'Come to my lodging, Edmund,' answered the earl — 'not to-morrow or next day, but soon. Ha, Will Shakspeare — wild Will! thou hast given my nephew, Philip Sidney, love powder he cannot sleep without thy *Venus and Adonis* under his pillow! We will have thee hanged for the veriest wizard in

Europe Hark thee, mad wag, I have not forgotten thy matter of the patent and of the bears'

The *player* bowed, and the earl nodded and passed on — so that age would have told the tale, in ours, perhaps, we might say the immortal had done homage to the mortal. The next whom the favourite accosted was one of his own zealous dependants

'How now, Sir Francis Denning,' he whispered, in answer to his exulting salutation, 'that smile hath made thy face shorter by one-third than when I first saw it this morning. What, Master Bowyer, stand you back, and think you I bear malice? You did but your duty this morning, and if I remember aught of the passage betwixt us, it shall be in thy favour'

Then the earl was approached, with several fantastic congees, by a person quaintly dressed in a doublet of black velvet, curiously slashed and pinked with crimson satin. A long cock's feather in the velvet bonnet which he held in his hand, and an enormous ruff, stiffened to the extremity of the absurd taste of the times, joined with a sharp, lively, conceited expression of countenance, seemed to body forth a vain, hare-brained coxcomb and small wit, while the rod he held, and an assumption of royal authority, appeared to express some sense of official consequence, which qualified the natural pertness of his manner. A perpetual blush, which occupied rather the sharp nose than the thin cheek of this personage, seemed to speak more of 'good life,' as it was called, than of modesty; and the manner in which he approached to the earl confirmed that suspicion.

'Good even to you, Master Robert Laneham,' said Leicester, and seemed desirous to pass forward without farther speech

'I have a suit to your noble lordship,' said the figure, boldly following him.

'And what is it, good master keeper of the council-chamber door?'

'*Clerk* of the council-chamber door,' said Master Robert Laneham, with emphasis, by way of reply and of correction

'Well, qualify thine office as thou wilt, man,' replied the earl, 'what wouldst thou have with me?'

'Simply,' answered Laneham, 'that your lordship would be, as heretofore, my good lord, and procure me license to attend the summer progress unto your lordship's most beautiful and all-to-be unmatched Castle of Kenilworth.'

'To what purpose, good Master Laneham?' replied the earl, 'bethink you, my guests must needs be many'

'Not so many,' replied the petitioner, 'but that your nobleness will willingly spare your old servitor his crib and his mess. Bethink you, my lord, how necessary is this rod of mine to fright away all those listeners who else would play at bo-peep with the honourable council, and be searching for keyholes and crannies in the door of the chamber, so as to render my staff as needful as a fly-flap in a butcher's shop'

'Methinks you have found out a fly blown comparison for the honourable council, Master Laneham,' said the earl, 'but seek not about to justify it. Come to Kenilworth, if you list, there will be store of fools there besides, and so you will be fitted.'

'Nay, an there be fools, my lord,' replied Laneham, with much glee, 'I warrant I will make sport among them, for no greyhound loves to cote a hare as I to turn and course a fool. But I have another singular favour to beseech of your honour'

'Speak it, and let me go,' said the earl, 'I think the Queen comes forth instantly'

'My very good lord, I would fain bring a bed fellow with me.'

'How, you irreverent rascal!' said Leicester

'Nay, my lord, my meaning was within the canons,' answered his unblushing, or rather his ever-blushing, petitioner. 'I have a wife as curious as her grandmother, who eat the apple. Now, take her with me I may not, her Highness' orders being so strict against the officers bringing with them their wives in a progress, and so lumbering the court with womankind. But what I would crave of your lordship is, to find room for her in some mummary or pretty pageant, in disguise, as it were, so that, not being known for my wife, there may be no offence.'

'The foul fiend seize ye both!' said Leicester, stung into uncontrollable passion by the recollection which this speech excited. 'Why stop you me with such follies?'

The terrified clerk of the chamber door, astonished at the burst of resentment he had so unconsciously produced, dropped his staff of office from his hand, and gazed on the incensed earl with a foolish face of wonder and terror, which instantly recalled Leicester to himself.

'I meant but to try if thou hadst the audacity which befits thine office,' said he, hastily. 'Come to Kenilworth, and bring the devil with thee if thou wilt.'

'My wife, sir, hath played the devil ere now, in a mystery, in Queen Mary's time, but we shall want a trifle for properties.'

'Here is a crown for thee,' said the earl, 'make me rid of thee — the great bell rings'

Master Robert Lancham¹ stared a moment at the agitation which he had excited, and then said to himself, as he stooped to pick up his staff of office, 'The noble earl runs wild humours to-day, but they who give crowns expect us witty fellows to wink at their unsettled starts, and, by my faith, if they paid not for mercy, we would finger them tightly'

Leicester moved hastily on, neglecting the courtesies he had hitherto dispensed so liberally, and hurrying through the courtly crowd, until he paused in a small withdrawing-room, into which he plunged to draw a moment's breath unobserved and in seclusion

'What am I now,' he said to himself, 'that am thus jaded by the words of a mean, weather-beaten, goose-brained gull! Conscience, thou art a bloodhound, whose growl wakes as readily at the paltry stir of a rat or mouse as at the step of a lion. Can I not quit myself, by one bold stroke, of a state so irksome, so unhonoured? What if I kneel to Elizabeth, and, owning the whole, throw myself on her mercy?'

As he pursued this train of thought, the door of the apartment opened, and Varney rushed in

'Thank God, my lord, that I have found you!' was his exclamation

'Thank the devil, whose agent thou art,' was the earl's reply

'Thank whom you will, my lord,' replied Varney, 'but hasten to the water-side. The Queen is on board, and asks for you'

'Go, say I am taken suddenly ill,' replied Leicester, 'for, by Heaven, my brain can sustain this no longer!'

'I may well say so,' said Varney, with bitterness of expression, 'for your place, ay, and mine, who, as your master of the horse, was to have attended your lordship, is already filled up in the Queen's barge. The new minion, Walter Raleigh, and our old acquaintance, Tressilian, were called for to fill our places just as I hastened away to seek you'

'Thou art a devil, Varney,' said Leicester, hastily, 'but thou hast the mastery for the present. I follow thee'

Varney replied not, but led the way out of the palace, and towards the river, while his master followed him as if mechanically, until, looking back, he said in a tone which savoured of familiarity at least, if not of authority, 'How is this, my lord?'

¹ See Note 2

your cloak hangs on one side, your hose are unbraced, permit me —

‘Thou art a fool, Varney, as well as a knave,’ said Leicester, shaking him off, and rejecting his officious assistance, ‘we are best thus, sir — when we require you to order our person, it is well, but now we want you not.’

So saying, the earl resumed at once his air of command, and with it his self-possession, shook his dress into yet wilder disorder, passed before Varney with the air of a superior and master, and in his turn led the way to the river side.

The Queen’s barge was on the very point of putting off, the seat allotted to Leicester in the stern, and that to his master of the horse on the bow, of the boat being already filled up. But on Leicester’s approach there was a pause, as if the barge men anticipated some alteration in their company. The angry spot was, however, on the Queen’s cheek, as, in that cold tone with which superiors endeavour to veil their internal agitation, while speaking to those before whom it would be derogation to express it, she pronounced the chilling words — ‘We have waited, my Lord of Leicester.’

‘Madam and most gracious princess,’ said Leicester, ‘you, who can pardon so many weaknesses which your own heart never knows, can best bestow your commiseration on the agitations of the bosom, which, for a moment, affect both head and limbs. I came to your presence a doubting and an accused subject, your goodness penetrated the clouds of defamation, and restored me to my honour, and, what is yet dearer, to your favour — is it wonderful, though for me it is most unhappy, that my master of the horse should have found me in a state which scarce permitted me to make the exertion necessary to follow him to this place, when one glance of your Highness, although, alas! an angry one, has had power to do that for me in which Esculapius might have failed?’

‘How is this?’ said Elizabeth, hastily, looking at Varney, ‘hath your lord been ill?’

‘Something of a fainting fit,’ answered the ready-witted Varney, ‘as your Grace may observe from his present condition. My lord’s haste would not permit me leisure even to bring his dress into order.’

‘It matters not,’ said Elizabeth, as she gazed on the noble face and form of Leicester, to which even the strange mixture of passions by which he had been so lately agitated gave additional interest, ‘make room for my noble lord. Your place,

Master Varney, has been filled up, you must find a seat in another barge

Varney bowed and withdrew

'And you, too, our young squire of the cloak,' added she, looking at Raleigh, 'must, for the time, go to the barge of our ladies of honour. As for Tressilian, he hath already suffered too much by the caprice of women that I should aggrieve him by my change of plan, so far as he is concerned'

Leicester seated himself in his place in the barge, and close to the sovereign, Raleigh rose to retire, and Tressilian would have been so ill-timed in his 'courtesy as to offer to relinquish his own place to his friend, had not the acute glance of Raleigh himself, who seemed now in his native element, made him sensible that so ready a disclamation of the royal favour might be misinterpreted. He sate silent, therefore, whilst Raleigh, with a profound bow and a look of the deepest humiliation, was about to quit his place

A noble courtier, the gallant Lord Willoughby, read, as he thought, something in the Queen's face which seemed to pity Raleigh's real or assumed semblance of mortification.

'It is not for us old courtiers,' he said, 'to hide the sunshine from the young ones. I will, with her Majesty's leave, relinquish for an hour that which her subjects hold dearest, the delight of her Highness's presence, and mortify myself by walking in starlight, while I forsake for a brief season the glory of Diana's own beams. I will take place in the boat which the ladies occupy, and permit this young cavalier his hour of promised felicity'

The Queen replied, with an expression betwixt mirth and earnest, 'If you are so willing to leave us, my lord, we cannot help the mortification. But, under favour, we do not trust you — old and experienced as you may deem yourself — with the care of our young ladies of honour. Your venerable age, my lord,' she continued, smiling, 'may be better assorted with that of my lord treasurer, who follows in the third boat, and by whose experience even my Lord Willoughby's may be improved.'

Lord Willoughby hid his disappointment under a smile, laughed, was confused, bowed, and left the Queen's barge to go on board my Lord Burleigh's. Leicester, who endeavoured to divert his thoughts from all internal reflection by fixing them on what was passing around, watched this circumstance among others. But when the boat put off from the shore, when the music sounded from a barge which accompanied them, when

the shouts of the populace were heard from the shore, and all reminded him of the situation in which he was placed, he abstracted his thoughts and his feelings by a strong effort from everything but the necessity of maintaining himself in the favour of his patroness, and exerted his talents of pleasing captivation with such success that the Queen, alternately delighted with his conversation and alarmed for his health, at length imposed a temporary silence on him, with playful yet anxious care, lest his flow of spirits should exhaust him.

'My lords,' she said, 'having passed for a time our edict of silence upon our good Leicester, we will call you to counsel on a gamesome matter, more fitted to be now treated of, amidst mirth and music, than in the gravity of our ordinary deliberations. Which of you, my lords,' said she, smiling, 'know aught of a petition from Orson Pinnit, the keeper, as he qualifies himself, of our royal bears? Who stands godfather to his request?'

'Marry, with your Grace's good permission, that do I,' said the Earl of Sussex. 'Orson Pinnit was a stout soldier before he was so mangled by the skenes of the Irish clan MacDonough, and I trust your Grace will be, as you always have been, good mistress to your good and trusty servants.'

'Surely,' said the Queen, 'it is our purpose to be so, and in especial to our poor soldiers and sailors, who hazard their lives for little pay. We would give,' she said, with her eyes sparkling, 'yonder royal palace of ours to be an hospital for their use, rather than they should call their mistress ungrateful. But this is not the question,' she said, her voice, which had been awakened by her patriotic feelings, once more subsiding into the tone of gay and easy conversation, 'for this Orson Pinnit's request goes something farther. He complains that, amidst the extreme delight with which men haunt the play-houses, and in especial their eager desire for seeing the exhibitions of one Will Shakspeare — whom, I think, my lords, we have all heard something of — the manly amusement of bear-baiting is falling into comparative neglect, since men will rather throng to see these roguish players kill each other in jest than to see our royal dogs and bears worry each other in bloody earnest. What say you to this, my Lord of Sussex?'

'Why, truly, gracious madam,' said Sussex, 'you must expect little from an old soldier like me in favour of battles in sport, when they are compared with battles in earnest, and yet, by my faith, I wish Will Shakspeare no harm. He is a stout man at quarter staff and single falchion, though, as I am

told, a halting fellow, and he stood, they say, a tough fight with the rangers of old Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecot, when he broke his deer-park and kissed his keeper's daughter'

'I cry you mercy, my Lord of Sussex,' said Queen Elizabeth, interrupting him, 'that matter was heard in council, and we will not have this fellow's offence exaggerated there was no kissing in the matter, and the defendant hath put the denial on record. But what say you to his present practice, my lord, on the stage? for there lies the point, and not in any ways touching his former errors, in breaking parks or the other follies you speak of'

'Why, truly, madam,' replied Sussex, 'as I said before, I wish the gamesome, mad fellow no injury. Some of his whorson poetry — I crave your Grace's pardon for such a phrase — has rung in mine ears as if the lines sounded to boot and saddle. But then it is all froth and folly — no substance or seriousness in it, as your Grace has already well touched. What are half a dozen knaves, with rusty foils and tattered targets, making but a mere mockery of a stout fight, to compare to the royal game of bear-baiting, which had been graced by your Highness's countenance, and that of your royal predecessors, in this your princely kingdom, famous for matchless mastiffs and bold bear-wards over all Christendom? Greatly is it to be doubted that the race of both will decay, if men should throng to hear the lungs of an idle player belch forth nonsensical bombast, instead of bestowing their pence in encouraging the bravest image of war that can be shown in peace, and that is the sports of the bear-garden. There you may see the bear lying at guard with his red pinky eyes, watching the onset of the mastiff, like a wily captain, who maintains his defence that an assailant may be tempted to venture within his danger. And then comes sir mastiff, like a worthy champion, in full career at the throat of his adversary, and then shall sir bruin teach him the reward for those who, in their over-courage, neglect the policies of war, and, catching him in his arms, strain him to his breast like a lusty wrestler, until rib after rib crack like the shot of a pistolet. And then another mastiff, as bold, but with better aim and sounder judgment, catches sir bruin by the nether lip, and hangs fast, while he tosses about his blood and slaver, and tries in vain to shake Sir Talbot from his hold. And then ——'

'Nay, by my honour, my lord,' said the Queen, laughing, 'you have described the whole so admirably that, had we never seen a bear-baiting, as we have beheld many, and hope,

honest mirth, mingled with useful instruction, not only our subjects, but even the generation which may succeed to us’

‘Your Majesty’s reign will need no such feeble aid to make it remembered to the latest posterity,’ said Leicester. ‘And yet, in his way, Shakspeare hath so touched some incidents of your Majesty’s happy government as may countervail what has been spoken by his reverence the Dean of St Asaph’s. There are some lines, for example—I would my nephew, Philip Sidney, were here, they are scarce ever out of his mouth—they are spoken in a mad tale of fairies, love-charms, and I wot not what besides, but beautiful they are, however short they may and must fall of the subject to which they bear a bold relation, and Philip murmurs them, I think, even in his dreams’

‘You tantalise us, my lord,’ said the Queen ‘Master Philip Sidney is, we know, a minion of the Muses, and we are pleased it should be so. Valour never shines to more advantage than when united with the true taste and love of letters. But surely there are some others among our young courtiers who can recollect what your lordship has forgotten amid weightier affairs. Master Tressilian, you are described to me as a worshipper of Minerva—remember you aught of these lines?’

Tressilian’s heart was too heavy, his prospects in life too fatally blighted, to profit by the opportunity which the Queen thus offered to him of attracting her attention, but he determined to transfer the advantage to his more ambitious young friend, and, excusing himself on the score of want of recollection, he added, that he believed the beautiful verses of which my Lord of Leicester had spoken were in the remembrance of Master Walter Raleigh

At the command of the Queen, that cavalier repeated, with accent and manner which even added to their exquisite delicacy of tact and beauty of description, the celebrated vision of Oberon

‘That very time I saw (but thou couldst not),
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid, all arm’d, a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal, throned by the west,
And loos’d his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts
But I might see young Cupid’s fiery shaft
Quench’d in the chaste beams of the watery moon;
And the imperial vot’ress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy free’

The voice of Raleigh, as he repeated the last lines, became a little tremulous, as if diffident how the sovereign to whom the homage was addressed might receive it, exquisite as it was. If this diffidence was affected, it was good policy, but if real, there was little occasion for it. The verses were not probably new to the Queen, for when was ever such elegant flattery long in reaching the royal ear to which it was addressed? But they were not the less welcome when repeated by such a speaker as Raleigh. Alike delighted with the matter, the manner, and the graceful form and animated countenance of the gallant young reciter, Elizabeth kept time to every cadence with look and with finger. When the speaker had ceased, she murmured over the last lines as if scarce conscious that she was overheard, and as she uttered the words,

‘In maiden meditation, fancy free,’

she dropt into the Thames the supplication of Orson Pinnit, keeper of the royal bears, to find more favourable acceptance at Sheerness, or wherever the tide might waft it.

Leicester was spurred to emulation by the success of the young courtier’s exhibition, as the veteran racer is roused when a high mettled colt passes him on the way. He turned the discourse on shows, banquets, pageants, and on the character of those by whom these gay scenes were then frequented. He mixed acute observation with light satire, in that just proportion which was free alike from malignant slander and insipid praise. He mimicked with ready accent the manners of the affected or the clownish, and made his own graceful tone and manner seem doubly such when he resumed it. Foreign countries — their customs, their manners, the rules of their courts, the fashions, and even the dress, of their ladies, were equally his theme, and seldom did he conclude without conveying some compliment, always couched in delicacy and expressed with propriety, to the Virgin Queen, her court, and her government. Thus passed the conversation during this pleasure voyage, seconded by the rest of the attendants upon the royal person, in gay discourse, varied by remarks upon ancient classics and modern authors, and enriched by maxims of deep policy and sound morality by the statesmen and sages who sat around, and mixed wisdom with the lighter talk of a female court.

When they returned to the palace, Elizabeth accepted, or rather selected, the arm of Leicester to support her from the stairs where they landed to the great gate. It even seemed to

him (though that might arise from the flattery of his own imagination) that, during this short passage, she leaned on him somewhat more than the slipperiness of the way necessarily demanded. Certainly her actions and words combined to express a degree of favour which, even in his proudest days, he had not till then attained. His rival, indeed, was repeatedly graced by the Queen's notice, but it was in a manner that seemed to flow less from spontaneous inclination than as extorted by a sense of his merit. And, in the opinion of many experienced courtiers, all the favour she showed him was overbalanced by her whispering in the ear of the Lady Derby, that 'Now she saw sickness was a better alchemist than she before wotted of, seeing it had changed my Lord of Sussex's copper nose into a golden one.'

The jest transpired, and the Earl of Leicester enjoyed his triumph, as one to whom court favour had been both the primary and the ultimate motive of life, while he forgot in the intoxication of the moment the perplexities and dangers of his own situation. Indeed, strange as it may appear, he thought less at that moment of the perils arising from his secret union than of the marks of grace which Elizabeth from time to time showed to young Raleigh. They were indeed transient, but they were conferred on one accomplished in mind and body with grace, gallantry, literature, and valour. An accident occurred in the course of the evening which riveted Leicester's attention to this object.

The nobles and courtiers who had attended the Queen on her pleasure expedition were invited, with royal hospitality, to a splendid banquet in the hall of the palace. The table was not, indeed, graced by the presence of the sovereign, for, agreeable to her idea of what was at once modest and dignified, the Maiden Queen on such occasions was wont to take in private, or with one or two favourite ladies, her light and temperate meal. After a moderate interval, the court again met in the splendid gardens of the palace, and it was while thus engaged that the Queen suddenly asked a lady, who was near to her both in place and favour, what had become of the young Squire Lack-Cloak.

The Lady Paget answered, 'She had seen Master Raleigh but two or three minutes since, standing at the window of a small pavilion or pleasure-house which looked out on the Thames, and writing on the glass with a diamond ring.'

'That ring,' said the Queen, 'was a small token I gave him,

to make amends for his spoiled mantle. Come, Paget, let us see what use he has made of it, for I can see through him already. He is a marvellously sharp-witted spirit.'

They went to the spot, within sight of which, but at some distance, the young cavalier still lingered, as the fowler watches the net which he has set. The Queen approached the window, on which Raleigh had used her gift to inscribe the following line —

'Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall'

The Queen smiled, read it over twice, once with deliberation to Lady Paget, and once again to herself. 'It is a pretty beginning,' she said, after the consideration of a moment or two, 'but methinks the muse hath deserted the young wit at the very outset of his task. It were good-natured, were it not, Lady Paget, to complete it for him? Try your rhyming faculties.'

Lady Paget, prosaic from her cradle upwards, as ever any lady of the bedchamber before or after her, disclaimed all possibility of assisting the young poet.

'Nay, then, we must sacrifice to the Muses ourselves,' said Elizabeth.

'The incense of no one can be more acceptable,' said Lady Paget, 'and your Highness will impose such obligation on the ladies of Parnassus —'

'Hush, Paget,' said the Queen, 'you speak sacrilege against the immortal Nine, yet, virgins themselves, they should be exorable to a virgin queen, and, therefore, let me see how runs his verse —'

Fain would I climb, but that I fear to fall

Might not the answer, for fault of a better, run thus —

If thy mind fail thee, do not climb at all?

The dame of honour uttered an exclamation of joy and surprise at so happy a termination, and certainly a worse has been applauded, even when coming from a less distinguished author.

The Queen, thus encouraged, took off a diamond ring, and saying, 'We will give this gallant some cause of marvel, when he finds his couplet perfected without his own interference,' she wrote her own line beneath that of Raleigh.

The Queen left the pavilion, but, retiring slowly, and often

looking back, she could see the young cavalier steal, with the flight of a lapwing, towards the place where he had seen her make a pause. 'She staid but to observe,' as she said, 'that her train had taken', and then, laughing at the circumstance with the Lady Paget, she took the way slowly towards the palace. Elizabeth, as they returned, cautioned her companion not to mention to any one the aid which she had given to the young poet, and Lady Paget promised scrupulous secrecy. It is to be supposed that she made a mental reservation in favour of Leicester, to whom her ladyship transmitted without delay an anecdote so little calculated to give him pleasure.

Raleigh, in the meanwhile, stole back to the window, and read, with a feeling of intoxication, the encouragement thus given him by the Queen in person to follow out his ambitious career, and returned to Sussex and his retinue, then on the point of embarking to go up the river, his heart beating high with gratified pride and with hope of future distinction.

The reverence due to the person of the earl prevented any notice being taken of the reception he had met with at court, until they had landed, and the household were assembled in the great hall at Say's Court, while that lord, exhausted by his late illness and the fatigues of the day, had retired to his chamber, demanding the attendance of Wayland, his successful physician. Wayland, however, was nowhere to be found, and, while some of the party were, with military impatience, seeking him, and cursing his absence, the rest flocked around Raleigh to congratulate him on his prospects of court favour.

He had the good taste and judgment to conceal the decisive circumstance of the couplet, to which Elizabeth had deigned to find a rhyme, but other circumstances had transpired which plainly intimated that he had made some progress in the Queen's favour. All hastened to wish him joy on the mended appearance of his fortune — some from real regard, some, perhaps, from hopes that his preferment might hasten their own, and most from a mixture of these motives, and a sense that the countenance shown to any one of Sussex's household was, in fact, a triumph to the whole. Raleigh returned the kindest thanks to them all, disowning, with becoming modesty, that one day's fair reception made a favourite, any more than one swallow a summer. But he observed that Blount did not join in the general congratulation, and, somewhat hurt at his apparent unkindness, he plainly asked him the reason.

Blount replied with equal sincerity — 'My good Walter, I

wish thee as well as do any of these chattering gulls, who are whistling and whooping gratulations in thine ear, because it seems fair weather with thee. But I fear for thee, Walter (and he wiped his honest eye) — I fear for thee with all my heart. These court tricks, and gambols, and flashes of fine women's favour, are the tricks and trinkets that bring fair fortunes to farthings, and fine faces and witty coxcombs to the acquaintance of dull block and sharp axes.'

So saying, Blount arose and left the hall, while Raleigh looked after him with an expression that blanked for a moment his bold and animated countenance.

Stanley just then entered the hall, and said to Tressilian, 'My lord is calling for your fellow Wayland, and your fellow Wayland is just come hither in a sculler, and is calling for you, nor will he go to my lord till he sees you. The fellow looks as he were mazed, methinks. I would you would see him immediately.'

Tressilian instantly left the hall, and causing Wayland Smith to be shown into a withdrawing-apartment, and lights placed, he conducted the artist thither, and was surprised when he observed the emotion of his countenance.

'What is the matter with you, Smith?' said Tressilian, 'have you seen the devil?'

'Worse, sir — worse,' replied Wayland, 'I have seen a basilisk. Thank God, I saw him first, for, being so seen, and seeing not me, he will do the less harm.'

'In God's name, speak sense,' said Tressilian, 'and say what you mean!'

'I have seen my old master,' said the artist. 'Last night, a friend whom I had acquired took me to see the palace clock, judging me to be curious in such works of art. At the window of a turret next to the clock-house I saw my old master.'

'Thou must needs have been mistaken,' said Tressilian.

'I was not mistaken,' said Wayland. 'He that once hath his features by heart would know him amongst a million. He was antiently habited, but he cannot disguise himself from me, God be praised! as I can from him. I will not, however, tempt Providence by remaining within his ken. Tarleton the player himself could not so disguise himself but that, sooner or later, Doboobie would find him out. I must away to-morrow, for, as we stand together, it were death to me to remain within reach of him.'

'But the Earl of Sussex?' said Tressilian.

'He is in little danger from what he has hitherto taken, provided he swallow the matter of a bean's size of the orvietan every morning fasting, but let him beware of a relapse'

'And how is that to be guarded against?' said Tressilian

'Only by such caution as you would use against the devil,' answered Wayland 'Let my lord's clerk of the kitchen kill his lord's meat himself, and dress it himself, using no spice but what he procures from the surest hands Let the sewer serve it up himself, and let the master of my lord's household see that both clerk and sewer taste the dishes which the one dresses and the other serves Let my lord use no perfumes which come not from well accredited persons — no unguents — no pomades Let him, on no account, drink with strangers, or eat fruit with them, either in the way of nooning or otherwise. Especially, let him observe such caution if he goes to Kenilworth the excuse of his illness, and his being under diet, will, and must, cover the strangeness of such practice.'

'And thou,' said Tressilian, 'what dost thou think to make of thyself?'

'France, Spain, either India, East or West, shall be my refuge,' said Wayland, 'ere I venture my life by residing within ken of Doboobie, Demetrius, or whatever else he calls himself for the time'

'Well,' said Tressilian, 'this happens not inopportunately I had business for you in Berkshire, but in the opposite extremity to the place where thou art known; and ere thou hadst found out this new reason for living private, I had settled to send thee thither upon a secret embassy'

The artist expressed himself willing to receive his commands, and Tressilian, knowing he was well acquainted with the outline of his business at court, frankly explained to him the whole, mentioned the agreement which subsisted betwixt Giles Gosling and him, and told what had that day been averred in the presence-chamber by Varney, and supported by Leicester.

'Thou seest,' he added, 'that, in the circumstances in which I am placed, it behoves me to keep a narrow watch on the motions of these unprincipled men, Varney and his complices, Foster and Lambourne, as well as those of my Lord Leicester himself, who, I suspect, is partly a deceiver, and not altogether the deceived in that matter Here is my ring, as a pledge to Giles Gosling, here is, besides, gold, which shall be trebled if thou serve me faithfully. Away down to Cumnor, and see what happens there'

CHAPTER XVIII

The moment comes —

It is already come — when thou must write
The absolute total of thy life's vast sum
The constellations stand victorious o'er thee,
The planets shoot good fortune in fair junctions,
And tell thee, ' Now's the time '

SCHILLER'S *Wallenstein*, by COLERIDGE.

WHEN Leicester returned to his lodging, after a day so important and so harassing, in which, after riding out more than one gale, and touching on more than one shoal, his bark had finally gained the harbour with banner displayed, he seemed to experience as much fatigue as a mariner after a perilous storm. He spoke not a word while his chamberlain exchanged his rich court-mantle for a furred night-robe, and when this officer signified that Master Varney desired to speak with his lordship, he replied only by a sullen nod. Varney, however, entered, accepting this signal as a permission, and the chamberlain withdrew.

The earl remained silent and almost motionless in his chair, his head reclined on his hand, and his elbow resting upon the table which stood beside him, without seeming to be conscious of the entrance or of the presence of his confidant. Varney waited for some minutes until he should speak, desirous to know what was the finally predominant mood of a mind through which so many powerful emotions had that day taken their course. But he waited in vain, for Leicester continued still silent, and the confidant saw himself under the necessity of being the first to speak. ' May I congratulate your lordship,' he said, ' on the deserved superiority you have this day attained over your most formidable rival ? '

Leicester raised his head, and answered sadly, but without anger, ' Thou, Varney, whose ready invention has involved me in a web of most mean and perilous falsehood, knowest best what small reason there is for gratulation on the subject '

'Do you blame me, my lord,' said Varney, 'for not betraying, on the first push, the secret on which your fortunes depended, and which you have so oft and so earnestly recommended to my safe keeping? Your lordship was present in person, and might have contradicted me and ruined yourself by an avowal of the truth, but surely it was no part of a faithful servant to have done so without your commands.'

'I cannot deny it, Varney,' said the earl, rising and walking across the room, 'my own ambition has been traitor to my love.'

'Say, rather, my lord, that your love has been traitor to your greatness, and barred you from such a prospect of honour and power as the world cannot offer to any other. To make my honoured lady a countess, you have missed the chance of being yourself——'

He paused, and seemed unwilling to complete the sentence.

'Of being myself *what*?' demanded Leicester, 'speak out thy meaning, Varney.'

'Of being yourself a KING, my lord,' replied Varney, 'and King of England to boot! It is no treason to our Queen to say so. It would have chanced by her obtaining that which all true subjects wish her—a lusty, noble, and gallant husband.'

'Thou ravest, Varney,' answered Leicester. 'Besides, our times have seen enough to make men loathe the crown matrimonial which men take from their wives' lap. There was Darnley of Scotland.'

'He!' said Varney—'a gull, a fool, a thrice sodden ass, who suffered himself to be fired off into the air like a rocket on a rejoicing-day. Had Mary had the hap to have wedded the noble earl *once* destined to share her throne, she had experienced a husband of different metal, and her husband had found in her a wife as complying and loving as the mate of the meanest squire, who follows the hounds a-horseback, and holds her husband's bridle as he mounts.'

'It might have been as thou sayest, Varney,' said Leicester, a brief smile of self-satisfaction passing over his anxious countenance. 'Henry Darnley knew little of women. With Mary, a man who knew her sex might have had some chance of holding his own, but not with Elizabeth, Varney, for I think God, when He gave her the heart of a woman, gave her the head of a man to control its follies. No, I know her. She will accept love tokens—ay, and requite them with the like, put sugared sonnets in her bosom—ay, and answer them too, push gallantry to the very verge where it becomes exchange of

affection, but she writes *nil ultra* to all which is to follow, and would not barter one iota of her own supreme power for all the alphabet of both Cupid and Hymen'

'The better for you, my lord,' said Varney, 'that is, in the case supposed, if such be her disposition, since you think you cannot aspire to become her husband. Her favourite you are, and may remain, if the lady at Cumnor Place continues in her present obscurity'

'Poor Amy!' said Leicester, with a deep sigh, 'she desires so earnestly to be acknowledged in presence of God and man!'

'Ay, but, my lord,' said Varney, 'is her desire reasonable? that is the question. Her religious scruples are solved she is an honoured and beloved wife, enjoying the society of her husband at such times as his weightier duties permit him to afford her his company. What would she more? I am right sure that a lady so gentle and so loving would consent to live her life through in a certain obscurity—which is, after all, not dimmer than when she was at Lidcote Hall—rather than diminish the least jot of her lord's honours and greatness by a premature attempt to share them.'

'There is something in what thou sayest,' said Leicester, 'and her appearance here were fatal. Yet she must be seen at Kenilworth. Elizabeth will not forget that she has so appointed'

'Let me sleep on that point,' said Varney, 'I cannot else perfect the device I have on the stithy, which I trust will satisfy the Queen and please my honoured lady, yet leave this fatal secret where it is now buried. Has your lordship further commands for the night?'

'I would be alone,' said Leicester. 'Leave me, and place my steel casket on the table. Be within summons'

Varney retired, and the earl, opening the window of his apartment, looked out long and anxiously upon the brilliant host of stars which glimmered in the splendour of a summer firmament. The words burst from him as at unawares—'I had never more need that the heavenly bodies should befriend me, for my earthly path is darkened and confused'

It is well known that the age reposed a deep confidence in the vain predictions of judicial astrology, and Leicester, though exempt from the general control of superstition, was not in this respect superior to his time, but, on the contrary, was remarkable for the encouragement which he gave to the professors of this pretended science. Indeed, the wish to pry into

futurity, so general among the human race, is peculiarly to be found amongst those who trade in state mysteries, and the dangerous intrigues and cabals of courts. With heedful precaution to see that it had not been opened, or its locks tampered with, Leicester applied a key to the steel casket, and drew from it, first, a parcel of gold pieces, which he put into a silk purse, then a parchment inscribed with planetary signs, and the lines and calculations used in framing horoscopes, on which he gazed intently for a few moments, and, lastly, took forth a large key, which, lifting aside the tapestry, he applied to a little concealed door in the corner of the apartment, and, opening it, disclosed a stair constructed in the thickness of the wall

'Alasco,' said the earl, with a voice raised, yet no higher raised than to be heard by the inhabitant of the small turret to which the stair conducted — 'Alasco, I say, descend'

'I come, my lord,' answered a voice from above. The foot of an aged man was heard slowly descending the narrow stair, and Alasco entered the earl's apartment. The astrologer was a little man, and seemed much advanced in age, for his beard was long and white, and reached over his black doublet down to his silken girdle. His hair was of the same venerable hue. But his eyebrows were as dark as the keen and piercing black eyes which they shaded, and this peculiarity gave a wild and singular cast to the physiognomy of the old man. His cheek was still fresh and ruddy, and the eyes we have mentioned resembled those of a rat in acuteness, and even fierceness, of expression. His manner was not without a sort of dignity, and the interpreter of the stars, though respectful, seemed altogether at his ease, and even assumed a tone of instruction and command in conversing with the prime favourite of Elizabeth

'Your prognostications have failed, Alasco,' said the earl, when they had exchanged salutations. 'He is recovering'

'My son,' replied the astrologer, 'let me remind you, I warranted not his death, nor is there any prognostication that can be derived from the heavenly bodies, their aspects and their conjunctions, which is not liable to be controlled by the will of Heaven. *Astra regunt homines, sed regit astra Deus*'

'Of what avail, then, is your mystery?' inquired the earl

'Of much, my son,' replied the old man, 'since it can show the natural and probable course of events, although that course moves in subordination to a Higher Power. Thus, in reviewing the horoscope which your lordship subjected to my skill, you will observe that Saturn, being in the sixth house in opposition

to Mars, retrograde in the House of Life, cannot but denote long and dangerous sickness, the issue whereof is in the will of Heaven, though death may probably be inferred. Yet, if I knew the name of the party, I would erect another scheme.'

'His name is a secret,' said the earl, 'yet, I must own, thy prognostication hath not been unfaithful. He has been sick, and dangerously so — not, however, to death. But hast thou again cast my horoscope, as Varney directed thee, and art thou prepared to say what the stars tell of my present fortune?'

'My art stands at your command,' said the old man, 'and here, my son, is the map of thy fortunes, brilliant in aspect as ever beamed from those blessed signs whereby our life is influenced, yet not unchequered with fears, difficulties, and dangers.'

'My lot were more than mortal were it otherwise,' said the earl, 'proceed, father, and believe you speak with one ready to undergo his destiny in action and in passion as may beseeem a noble of England.'

'Thy courage to do and to suffer must be wound up yet a strain higher,' said the old man. 'The stars intimate yet a prouder title, yet a higher rank. It is for thee to guess their meaning, not for me to name it.'

'Name it, I conjure you — name it, I command you,' said the earl, his eyes brightening as he spoke.

'I may not, and I will not,' replied the old man. 'The ire of princes is as the wrath of the lion. But mark, and judge for thyself. Here Venus, ascendant in the House of Life, and conjoined with Sol, showers down that flood of silver light, blent with gold, which promises power, wealth, dignity, all that the proud heart of man desires, and in such abundance, that never the future Augustus of that old and mighty Rome heard from his *haruspices* such a tale of glory as from this rich text my lore might read to my favourite son.'

'Thou dost but jest with me, father,' said the earl, astonished at the strain of enthusiasm in which the astrologer delivered his prediction.

'Is it for him to jest who hath his eye on heaven, who hath his foot in the grave?' returned the old man, solemnly.

The earl made two or three strides through the apartment, with his hand outstretched, as one who follows the beckoning signal of some phantom, waving him on to deeds of high import. As he turned, however, he caught the eye of the astrologer fixed on him, while an observing glance of the most shrewd

penetration shot from under the penthouse of his shaggy dark eyebrows. Leicester's haughty and suspicious soul at once caught fire, he darted towards the old man from the further end of the lofty apartment, only standing still when his extended hand was within a foot of the astrologer's body.

'Wretch!' he said, 'if you dare to palter with me, I will have your skin stripped from your living flesh! Confess thou hast been hired to deceive and to betray me — that thou art a cheat, and I thy silly prey and booty!'

The old man exhibited some symptoms of emotion, but not more than the furious deportment of his patron might have extorted from innocence itself.

'What means this violence, my lord?' he answered, 'or in what can I have deserved it at your hands?'

'Give me proof,' said the earl, vehemently, 'that you have not tampered with mine enemies.'

'My lord,' replied the old man, with dignity, 'you can have no better proof than that which you yourself elected. In that turret I have spent the last twenty-four hours, under the key which has been in your own custody. The hours of darkness I have spent in gazing on the heavenly bodies with these dim eyes, and during those of light I have toiled this aged brain to complete the calculation arising from their combinations. Earthly food I have not tasted — earthly voice I have not heard. You are yourself aware I had no means of doing so, and yet I tell you — I who have been thus shut up in solitude and study — that within these twenty-four hours your star has become predominant in the horizon, and either the bright book of heaven speaks false or there must have been a proportionate revolution in your fortunes upon earth. If nothing has happened within that space to secure your power or advance your favour, then am I indeed a cheat, and the divine art, which was first devised in the plains of Chaldea, is a foul imposture.'

'It is true,' said Leicester, after a moment's reflection, 'thou wert closely immured, and it is also true that the change has taken place in my situation which thou sayest the horoscope indicates.'

'Wherefore this distrust, then, my son?' said the astrologer, assuming a tone of admonition, 'the celestial intelligences brook not diffidence, even in their favourites.'

'Peace, father,' answered Leicester, 'I have erred in doubting thee. Not to mortal man, nor to celestial intelligence —'

under that which is supreme — will Dudley's lips say more in condescension or apology. Speak rather to the present purpose. Amid these bright promises, thou hast said there was a threatening aspect. Can thy skill tell whence, or by whose means, such danger seems to impend ?'

'Thus far only,' answered the astrologer, 'does my art enable me to answer your query. The infortune is threatened by the malignant and adverse aspect, through means of a youth, and, as I think, a rival, but whether in love or in prince's favour, I know not, nor can I give farther indication respecting him, save that he comes from the western quarter.'

'The western — ha !' replied Leicester, 'it is enough; the tempest does indeed brew in that quarter. Cornwall and Devon — Raleigh and Tressilian — one of them is indicated, I must beware of both. Father, if I have done thy skill injustice, I will make thee a lordly recompense.'

He took a purse of gold from the strong casket which stood before him. 'Have thou double the recompense which Varney promised. Be faithful — be secret — obey the directions thou shalt receive from my master of the horse, and grudge not a little seclusion or restraint in my cause, it shall be richly considered. Here, Varney, conduct this venerable man to thine own lodging, tend him heedfully in all things, but see that he holds communication with no one.'

Varney bowed, and the astrologer kissed the earl's hand in token of adieu, and followed the master of the horse to another apartment, in which were placed wine and refreshments for his use.

The astrologer sat down to his repast, while Varney shut two doors with great precaution, examined the tapestry, lest any listener lurked behind it, and then sitting down opposite to the sage, began to question him.

'Saw you my signal from the court beneath ?'

'I did,' said Alasco, for by such name he was at present called, 'and shaped the horoscope accordingly.'

'And it passed upon the patron without challenge?' continued Varney.

'Not without challenge,' replied the old man, 'but it did pass, and I added, as before agreed, danger from a discovered secret and a western youth.'

'My lord's fear will stand sponsor to the one and his conscience to the other of these prognostications,' replied Varney. 'Sure, never man chose to run such a race as his, yet continued

to retain those silly scruples! I am fain to cheat him to his own profit. But touching your matters, sage interpreter of the stars, I can tell you more of your own fortune than plan or figure can show. You must be gone from hence forthwith.'

'I will not,' said Alasco, peevishly. 'I have been too much hurried up and down of late — immured for day and night in a desolate turret-chamber, I must enjoy my liberty, and pursue my studies, which are of more import than the fate of fifty statesmen and favourites, that rise and burst like bubbles in the atmosphere of a court.'

'At your pleasure,' said Varney, with a sneer which habit had rendered familiar to his features, and which forms the principal characteristic that painters have assigned to those of Satan — 'at your pleasure,' he said, 'you may enjoy your liberty and your studies until the daggers of Sussex's followers are clashing within your doublet, and against your ribs.' The old man turned pale, and Varney proceeded. 'Wot you not he hath offered a reward for the arch quack and poison-vender, Demetrius, who sold certain precious spices to his lordship's cook? What! turn you pale, old friend? Does Hal already see an infortune in the House of Life? Why, hark thee, we will have thee down to an old house of mine in the country, where thou shalt live with a hobnailed slave, whom thy alchemy may convert into ducats, for to such conversion alone is thy art serviceable.'

'It is false, thou foul-mouthed railer,' said Alasco, shaking with impotent anger. 'it is well known that I have approached more nearly to projection than any hermetic artist who now lives. There are not six chemists in the world who possess so near an approximation to the grand arcanum —'

'Come — come,' said Varney, interrupting him, 'what means this, in the name of Heaven? Do we not know one another? I believe thee to be so perfect — so very perfect, in the mystery of cheating, that, having imposed upon all mankind, thou hast at length, in some measure, imposed upon thyself, and without ceasing to dupe others, hast become a species of dupe to thine own imagination. Blush not for it, man, thou art learned, and shalt have classical comfort

Ne quisquam Ajacem possit superare nisi Ajax

No one but thyself could have gulled thee, and thou hast gulled the whole brotherhood of the Rosy Cross beside — none so deep in the mystery as thou. But hark thee in thine ear,

had the seasoning which spiced Sussex's broth wrought more surely, I would have thought better of the chemical science thou dost boast so highly'

'Thou art a hardened villain, Varney,' replied Alasco, 'many will do those things, who dare not speak of them'

'And many speak of them who dare not do them,' answered Varney, 'but be not wroth—I will not quarrel with thee. If I did, I were fain to live on eggs for a month, that I might feed without fear. Tell me at once, how came thine art to fail thee at this great emergency?'

'The Earl of Sussex's horoscope intimates,' replied the astrologer, 'that the sign of the ascendant being in combustion——'

'Away with you gibberish,' replied Varney, 'think'st thou it is the patron thou speak'st with?'

'I crave your pardon,' replied the old man, 'and swear to you, I know but one medicine that could have saved the earl's life, and as no man living in England knows that antidote save myself, moreover, as the ingredients, one of them in particular, are scarce possible to be come by, I must needs suppose his escape was owing to such a constitution of lungs and vital parts as was never before bound up in a body of clay'

'There was some talk of a quack who waited upon him,' said Varney, after a moment's reflection. 'Are you sure there is no one in England who has this secret of thine?'

'One man there was,' said the doctor, 'once my servant, who might have stolen this of me, with one or two other secrets of art. But content you, Master Varney, it is no part of my policy to suffer such interlopers to interfere in my trade. He pries into no mysteries more, I warrant you, for, as I well believe, he hath been wafted to heaven on the wing of a fiery dragon. Peace be with him! But in this retreat of mine, shall I have the use of mine elaboratory?'

'Of a whole workshop, man,' said Varney, 'for a reverend father abbot, who was fain to give place to bluff King Hal and some of his courtiers a score of years since, had a chemist's complete apparatus, which he was obliged to leave behind him to his successors. Thou shalt there occupy, and melt, and puff, and blaze, and multiply, until the green dragon become a golden goose, or whatever the newer phrase of the brotherhood may testify'

'Thou art right, Master Varney,' said the alchemist, setting his teeth close and grinding them together—'thou art right,

even in thy very contempt of right and reason. For what thou sayest in mockery may in sober verity chance to happen ere we meet again. If the most venerable sages of ancient days have spoken the truth, if the most learned of our own have rightly received it, if I have been accepted wherever I travelled, in Germany, in Poland, in Italy, and in the farther Tartary, as one to whom nature has unveiled her darkest secrets, if I have acquired the most secret signs and passwords of the Jewish Cabala, so that the greyest beard in the synagogue would brush the steps to make them clean for me — if all this is so, and if there remains but one step — one little step — betwixt my long, deep, and dark, and subterranean progress and that blaze of light which shall show nature watching her richest and her most glorious productions in the very cradle — one step betwixt dependence and the power of sovereignty — one step betwixt poverty and such a sum of wealth as earth, without that noble secret, cannot minister from all her mines in the old or the new-found world — if this be all so, is it not reasonable that to this I dedicate my future life, secure, for a brief period of studious patience, to rise above the mean dependence upon favourites and *their* favourites by which I am now enthralled ?

‘Now, bravo! — bravo! my good father,’ said Varney, with the usual sardonic expression of ridicule on his countenance, ‘yet all this approximation to the philosopher’s stone wringeth not one single crown out of my Lord Leicester’s pouch, and far less out of Richard Varney’s. We must have earthly and substantial services, man, and care not whom else thou canst delude with thy philosophical charlatany.’

‘My son Varney,’ said the alchemist, ‘the unbelief, gathered around thee like a frost-fog, hath dimmed thine acute perception to that which is a stumbling-block to the wise, and which yet, to him who seeketh knowledge with humility, extends a lesson so clear that he who runs may read. Hath not art, think’st thou, the means of completing nature’s imperfect concoctions in her attempts to form the precious metals, even as by art we can perfect those other operations, of incubation, distillation, fermentation, and similar processes of an ordinary description, by which we extract life itself out of a senseless egg, summon purity and vitality out of muddy dregs, or call into vivacity the inert substance of a sluggish liquid ?’

‘I have heard all this before,’ said Varney, ‘and my heart is proof against such cant ever since I sent twenty good gold

pieces — marry, it was in the nouage of my wit — to advance the grand magisterium, all which, God help the while, vanished *in fumo*. Since that moment, when I paid for my freedom, I defy chemistry, astrology, palmistry, and every other occult art, were it as secret as hell itself, to unloose the stricture of my purse-strings. Marry, I neither defy the manna of St Nicholas nor can I dispense with it. Thy first task must be to prepare some when thou getst down to my little sequestered retreat yonder, and then make as much gold as thou wilt.

‘I will make no more of that dose,’ replied the alchemist, resolutely.

‘Then,’ said the master of the horse, ‘thou shalt be hanged for what thou hast made already, and so were the great secret for ever lost to mankind. Do not humanity this injustice, good father, but e’en bend to thy destiny, and make us an ounce or two of this same stuff, which cannot prejudice above one or two individuals, in order to gain lifetime to discover the universal medicine, which shall clear away all mortal diseases at once. But cheer up, thou grave, learned, and most melancholy jackanapes! Hast thou not told me that a moderate portion of thy drug hath mild effects, no ways ultimately dangerous to the human frame, but which produces depression of spirits, nausea, headache, an unwillingness to change of place — even such a state of temper as would keep a bird from flying out of a cage were the door left open?’

‘I have said so, and it is true,’ said the alchemist; ‘this effect will it produce, and the bird who partakes of it in such proportion shall sit for a season drooping on her perch, without thinking of the free blue sky or of the fair greenwood, though the one be lighted by the rays of the rising sun and the other ringing with the newly awakened song of all the feathered inhabitants of the forest.’

‘And this without danger to life?’ said Varney, somewhat anxiously.

‘Ay, so that proportion and measure be not exceeded, and so that one who knows the nature of the manna be ever near to watch the symptoms, and succour in case of need.’

‘Thou shalt regulate the whole,’ said Varney, ‘thy reward shall be princely, if thou keep’st time and touch, and exceedest not the due proportion, to the prejudice of her health, otherwise thy punishment shall be as signal.’

‘The prejudice of *her* health!’ repeated Alasco, ‘it is, then, a woman I am to use my skill upon?’

'No, thou fool,' replied Varney, 'said I not it was a bird — a reclaimed linnet, whose pipe might soothe a hawk when in mid stoop? I see thine eye sparkle, and I know thy beard is not altogether so white as art has made it *that*, at least, thou hast been able to transmute to silver. But mark me, this is no mate for thee. This caged bird is dear to one who brooks no rivalry, and far less such rivalry as thine, and her health must over all things be cared for. But she is in the case of being commanded down to yonder Kenilworth revels, and it is most expedient — most needful — most necessary that she fly not thither. Of these necessities and their causes it is not needful that she should know aught, and it is to be thought that her own wish may lead her to combat all ordinary reasons which can be urged for her remaining a housekeeper.'

'That is but natural,' said the alchemist, with a strange smile, which yet bore a greater reference to the human character than the uninterested and abstracted gaze which his physiognomy had hitherto expressed, where all seemed to refer to some world distant from that which was existing around him.

'It is so,' answered Varney, 'you understand women well, though it may have been long since you were conversant amongst them. Well, then, she is not to be contradicted, yet she is not to be humoured. Understand me — a slight illness, sufficient to take away the desire of removing from thence, and to make such of your wise fraternity as may be called in to aid recommend a quiet residence at home, will, in one word, be esteemed good service, and remunerated as such.'

'I am not to be asked to affect the House of Life?' said the chemist.

'On the contrary, we will have thee hanged if thou dost,' replied Varney.

'And I must,' added Alasco, 'have opportunity to do my turn, and all facilities for concealment or escape, should there be detection?'

'All — all, and everything, thou infidel in all but the impossibilities of alchemy. Why, man, for what dost thou take me?'

The old man rose, and taking a light, walked towards the end of the apartment, where was a door that led to the small sleeping-room destined for his reception during the night. At the door he turned round, and slowly repeated Varney's question ere he answered it. 'For what do I take thee, Richard Varney? Why, for a worse devil than I have been myself

Foster The doctor is to occupy the lower apartments of the eastern quadrangle, with freedom to use the old laboratory and its implements He is to have no access to the lady but such as I shall point out—only she may be amused to see his philosophical jugglery Thou wilt await at Cunnor Place my farther orders, and, as thou livest, beware of the ale bench and the aquavite flask Each breath drawn in Cunnor Place must be kept severed from common air

Enough, my lord—I mean my worshipful master—soon, I trust, to be my worshipful knightly master You have given me my lesson and my license, I will execute the one, and not abuse the other I will be in the saddle by daybreak

Do so, and deserve favour Stay—ere thou goest, fill me a cup of wine, not out of that flask, sirrah, as Lambourne was pouring out from that which Alasco had left half finished, fetch me a fresh one

Lambourne obeyed, and Varney, after rinsing his mouth with the liquor, drank a full cup, and said, as he took up a lamp to retreat to his sleeping apartment, 'It is strange—I am as little the slave of fancy as any one, yet I never speak for a few minutes with this fellow Alasco, but my mouth and lungs feel as if soiled with the fumes of calcined arsenic—pah!'

So saying, he left the apartment. Lambourne lingered, to drink a cup of the freshly opened flask. 'It is from St. John's Berg,' he said, as he paused in the draught to enjoy its flavour, 'and has the true relish of the violet. But I must forbear it now, that I may one day drink it at my own pleasure.' And he quaffed a goblet of water to quench the fumes of the Rhemish wine, retired slowly towards the door, made a pause, and then, finding the temptation irresistible, walked hastily back, and took another long pull at the wine-flask, without the formality of a cup

'Were it not for this accursed custom,' he said, 'I might climb as high as Varney himself. But who can climb when the room turns round with him like a parish-top? I would the distance were greater, or the road rougher, betwixt my hand and mouth! But I will drink nothing to-morrow save water—nothing save fair water'

But I am in your toils, and I must serve you till my term be out'

'Well—well,' answered Varney, hastily, 'be stirring with grey light. It may be we shall not need thy medicine. Do nought till I myself come down. Michael Lambourne shall guide you to the place of your destination.'¹

When Varney heard the adept's door shut and carefully bolted within, he stepped towards it, and with similar precaution carefully locked it on the outside, and took the key from the lock, muttering to himself, 'Worse than *thee*, thou poisoning quacksalver and witch-monger, who, if thou art not a bounden slave to the devil, it is only because he disdains such an apprentice!' I am a mortal man, and seek by mortal means the gratification of my passions and advancement of my prospects. Thou art a vassal of hell itself. So ho, Lambourne!' he called at another door, and Michael made his appearance, with a flushed cheek and an unsteady step.

'Thou art drunk, thou villain!' said Varney to him.

'Doubtless, noble sir,' replied the unabashed Michael, 'we have been drinking all even to the glories of the day, and to my noble Lord of Leicester, and his valiant master of the horse Drunk! odds blades and poniards, he that would refuse to swallow a dozen healths on such an evening is a base besognio and a puckfist, and shall swallow six inches of my dagger!'

'Hark ye, scoundrel,' said Varney, 'be sober on the instant, I command thee. I know thou canst throw off thy drunken folly, like a fool's coat, at pleasure, and if not, it were the worse for thee.'

Lambourne drooped his head, left the apartment, and returned in two or three minutes with his face composed, his hair adjusted, his dress in order, and exhibiting as great a difference from his former self as if the whole man had been changed.

'Art thou sober now, and dost thou comprehend me?' said Varney, sternly.

Lambourne bowed in acquiescence.

'Thou must presently down to Cumnor Place with the reverend man of art who sleeps yonder in the little vaulted chamber. Here is the key, that thou mayest call him by times. Take another trusty fellow with you. Use him well on the journey, but let him not escape you, pistol him if he attempt it, and I will be your warrant. I will give thee letters to

¹ See Dr Julio. Note 11.

was the general butt of the evening. The pedlar and he were closely engaged in a dispute upon the preference due to the Spanish nether-stock over the black Gascongue hose, and mine host had just winked to the guests around him, as who should say, 'You will have mirth presently, my masters,' when the trampling of horses was heard in the courtyard, and the hostler vogue to add force to the invocation. Out tumbled Will Hostler, John Taster, and all the militia of the inn, who had slunk from their posts in order to collect some scattered crumbs of the mirth which was flying about among the customers. Out into the yard sallied mine host himself also, to do fitting salutation to his new guests, and presently returned, ushering into the apartment his own worthy nephew, Michael Lambourne, pretty tolerably drunk, and having under his escort the astrologer Alasco, though still a little old man, had, by altering his gown to a riding dress, trimming his beard and eyebrows, and so forth, struck at least a score of years from his apparent age, and might now seem an active man of sixty, or little upwards. He appeared at present exceedingly anxious, and had insisted much with Lambourne that they should not enter the inn, but go straight forward to the place of their destination. But Lambourne would not be controlled. 'By Cancer and Capricorn,' he vociferated, 'and the whole heavenly host—besides all the stars that these blessed eyes of mine have seen sparkle in the southern heavens, to which these northern blinkers are but farthing candles—I will be unkindly for no one's humour—I will stay and salute my worthy uncle here. Obese! that good blood should ever be forgotten betwixt friends! A gallon of your best, uncle, and let it go round to the health of the noble Earl of Leicester! What! shall we not colloque together, and warm the cockles of our ancient kindness? Shall we not colloque, I say?'

'With all my heart, kinsman,' said mine host, who obviously wished to be rid of him, 'but are you to stand shot to all this good liquor?'

'This is a question has quelled many a jovial toper, but it moved not the purpose of Lambourne's soul. 'Question my means, nuncle?' he said, producing a handful of mixed gold and silver pieces—'question Mexico and Peru—question the Queen's exchequer—God save her Majesty! She is my good lord's good mistress.'

'Well, kinsman,' said mine host, 'it is my business to sell

CHAPTER XIX

Pistol. And tidings do I bring, and lucky joys,
And happy news of price

Falstaff I prithee now, deliver them like to men of this world.

Pistol A foutra for the world, and worldlings base !
I speak of Africa, and golden joys.

Henry IV Part II.

THE public room of the Black Bear at Cumnor, to which the scene of our story now returns, boasted, on the evening which we treat of, no ordinary assemblage of guests. There had been a fair in the neighbourhood, and the cutting mercer of Abingdon, with some of the other personages whom the reader has already been made acquainted with, as friends and customers of Giles Goshing, had already formed their wonted circle around the evening fire, and were talking over the news of the day.

A lively, bustling, arch fellow, whose pack and oaken ell-wand, studded duly with brass points, denoted him to be of Autolycus's profession, occupied a good deal of the attention, and furnished much of the amusement, of the evening. The pedlars of those days, it must be remembered, were men of far greater importance than the degenerate and degraded hawkers of our modern times. It was by means of these peripatetic venders that the country trade, in the finer manufactures used in female dress particularly, was almost entirely carried on, and if a merchant of this description arrived at the dignity of travelling with a pack-horse, he was a person of no small consequence, and company for the most substantial yeoman or franklin whom he might meet in his wanderings.

The pedlar of whom we speak bore, accordingly, an active and unrebuked share in the merriment to which the rafters of the bonny Black Bear of Cumnor resounded. He had his smile with pretty Mistress Cicely, his broad laugh with mine host, and his jest upon dashing Master Goldthred, who, though indeed without any such benevolent intention on his own part,

wine to those who can buy it So, Jack Tapster, do me thine office But I would I knew how to come by money as lightly as thou dost, Mike'

'Why, uncle,' said Lambourne, 'I will tell thee a secret Dost see this little old fellow here? as old and withered a chip as ever the devil put into his porridge, and yet, uncle, between you and me, he hath Potosi in that brain of his. 'Sblood' he can coin ducats faster than I can vent oaths'

'I will have none of his coinage in my purse though, Michael,' said mine host; 'I know what belongs to falsifying the Queen's coin'

'Thou art an ass, uncle, for as old as thou art. Pull me not by the skirts, doctor, thou art an ass thyself to boot, so, being both asses, I tell ye I spoke but metaphorically'

'Are you mad?' said the old man, 'is the devil in you? Can you not let us begone without drawing all men's eyes on us?'

'Sayest thou?' said Lambourne 'Thou art deceived now — no man shall see you an I give the word. By Heavens, masters, an any one dare to look on this old gentleman, I will slash the eyes out of his head with my poniard' So sit down, old friend, and be merry, these are mine ingles — mine ancient inmates, and will betray no man'

'Had you not better withdraw to a private apartment, nephew,' said Giles Goshing. 'You speak strange matter,' he added, 'and there be intelligencers everywhere'

'I care not for them,' said the magnanimous Michael. 'Intelligencers' pshaw! I serve the noble Earl of Leicester Here comes the wine Fill round, Master Skinker, a carouse to the health of the flower of England, the noble Earl of Leicester' I say, the noble Earl of Leicester! He that does me not reason is a swine of Sussex, and I'll make him kneel to the pledge, if I should cut his hams and smoke them for bacon.'

None disputed a pledge given under such formidable penalties, and Michael Lambourne, whose drunken humour was not of course diminished by this new potation, went on in the same wild way, renewing his acquaintance with such of the guests as he had formerly known, and experiencing a reception in which there was now something of deference, mingled with a good deal of fear, for the least servitor of the favourite earl, especially such a man as Lambourne, was, for very sufficient reasons, an object both of the one and of the other

In the meanwhile, the old man, seeing his guide in this uncontrollable humour, ceased to remonstrate with him, and sitting

down in the most obscure corner of the room, called for a small measure of sack, over which he seemed, as it were, to slumber, withdrawing himself as much as possible from general observation, and doing nothing which could recall his existence to the recollection of his fellow traveller, who by this time had got into close intimacy with his ancient comrade, Goldthred of Abingdon.

'Never believe me, bully Mike,' said the mercer, 'if I am not as glad to see thee as ever I was to see a customer's money! Why, thou canst give a friend a sly place at a mask or a revel now, Mike, ay, or, I warrant thee, thou canst say in my lord's ear, when my honourable lord is down in these parts, and wants a Spanish ruff or the like — thou canst say in his ear, "There is mine old friend, young Laurence Goldthred of Abingdon, has as good wares, lawn, tiffany, cambric, and so forth — ay, and is as pretty a piece of man's flesh, too, as is in Berkshire, and will ruffle it for your lordship with any man of his inches", and thou mayest say —'

'I can say a hundred d—d lies besides, mercer,' answered Lambourne, 'what, one must not stand upon a good word for a friend!'

'Here is to thee, Mike, with all my heart,' said the mercer, 'and thou canst tell one the reality of the new fashions too. Here was a rogue pedlar but now was crying up the old-fashioned Spanish nether-stock over the Gascoigne hose, although thou seest how well the French hose set off the leg and knee, being adorned with parti-coloured garters and garniture in conformity.'

'Excellent — excellent,' replied Lambourne, 'why, thy lumber bit of a thigh, thrust through that bunch of slashed buckram and tiffany, shows like a housewife's distaff when the flax is half spun off!'

'Said I not so?' said the mercer, whose shallow brain was now overflowed in his turn, 'where, then — where be this rascal pedlar? — there was a pedlar here but now, methinks. Mine host, where the foul fiend is this pedlar?'

'Where wise men should be, Master Goldthred,' replied Giles Gosling 'even shut up in his private chamber, telling over the sales of to day, and preparing for the custom of to-morrow.'

'Hang him, a mechanical chuff!' said the mercer, 'but for shame, it were a good deed to ease him of his wares — a set of peddling knaves, who stroll through the land, and hurt the

established trader There are good fellows in Berkshire yet, mine host, your pedlar may be met withal on Maiden Castle'

'Ay,' replied mine host, laughing, 'and he who meets him may meet his match the pedlar is a tall man'

'Is he?' said Goldthred

'Is he!' replied the host, 'ay, by cock and pie, is he — the very pedlar he who raddled Robin Hood so tightly, as the song says —

Now Robin Hood drew his sword so good,
The pedlar drew his brand,
And he hath raddled him Robin Hood,
Till he neither could see nor stand'

'Hang him, foul scroyle, let him pass,' said the mercer, 'if he be such a one, there were small worship to be won upon him And now tell me, Mike — my honest Mike, how wears the hollands you won of me?'

'Why, well, as you may see, Master Goldthred,' answered Mike, 'I will bestow a pot on thee for the handsel. Fill the flagon, Master Tapster'

'Thou wilt win no more hollands, I think, on such wager, friend Mike,' said the mercer, 'for the sulky swain, Tony Foster, rails at thee all to nought, and swears you shall ne'er darken his doors again, for that your oaths are enough to blow the roof off a Christian man's dwelling'

'Doth he say so, the mincing, hypocritical miser?' vociferated Lambourne 'Why, then, he shall come down and receive my commands here, this blessed night, under my uncle's roof! And I will ring him such a black sanctus that he shall think the devil hath him by the skirts for a month to come, for barely hearing me'

'Nay, now the pottle-pot is uppermost, with a witness!' said the mercer 'Tony Foster obey thy whistle! Alas! good Mike, go sleep — go sleep'

'I tell thee what, thou thin-faced gull,' said Michael Lambourne, in high chafe, 'I will wager thee fifty angels against the first five shelves of thy shop, numbering upward from the false light, with all that is on them, that I make Tony Foster come down to this public-house before we have finished three rounds'

'I will lay no bet to that amount,' said the mercer, something sobered by an offer which intimated rather too private a knowledge, on Lambourne's part, of the secret recesses of his shop — 'I will lay no such wager,' he said, 'but I will stake five

angels against thy five, if thou wilt, that Tony Foster will not leave his own roof, or come to alehouse after prayer time, for thee or any man'

'Content,' said Lambourne. 'Here, uncle, hold stakes, and let one of your young bleed-barrels there — one of your infant tapsters, trip presently up to the Place, and give this letter to Master Foster, and say that I, his ngle, Michael Lambourne, pray to speak with him at mine uncle's castle here, upon business of grave import. Away with thee, child, for it is now sundown, and the wretch goeth to bed with the birds, to save mutton suet — faugh !'

Shortly after this messenger was despatched — an interval which was spent in drinking and buffoonery — he returned with the answer that Master Foster was coming presently

'Won — won !' said Lambourne, darting on the stake

'Not tall he comes, if you please,' said the mercer, interfering

'Why, 'sblood, he is at the threshold,' replied Michael. 'What said he, boy ?'

'If it please your worship,' answered the messenger, 'he looked out of window, with a musketoon in his hand, and when I delivered your errand, which I did with fear and trembling, he said, with a vinegar aspect, that your worship might be gone to the infernal regions.'

'Or to hell, I suppose,' said Lambourne, 'it is there he disposes of all that are not of the congregation'

'Even so,' said the boy, 'I used the other phrase as being the more poetical.'

'An ingenious youth,' said Michael, 'shalt have a drop to wet thy poetical whistle. And what said Foster next ?'

'He called me back,' answered the boy, 'and bid me say, you might come to him, if you had aught to say to him'

'And what next ?' said Lambourne.

'He read the letter, and seemed in a fluster, and asked if your worship was in drink, and I said you were speaking a little Spanish, as one who had been in the Canaries'

'Out, you diminutive pint-pot, whelped of an overgrown reckoning !' replied Lambourne — 'out ! But what said he then ?'

'Why,' said the boy, 'he muttered, that if he came not, your worship would bolt out what were better kept in, and so he took his old flat cap, and threadbare blue cloak, and, as I said before, he will be here incontinent.'

'There is truth in what he said,' replied Lambourne, as if speaking to himself. 'My brain has played me its old dog's trick; but corragio — let him approach!' I have not rolled about in the world for many a day, to fear Tony Foster, be I drunk or sober. Bring me a flagon of cold water, to christen my sack withal.'

While Lambourne, whom the approach of Foster seemed to have recalled to a sense of his own condition, was busied in preparing to receive him, Giles Gosling stole up to the apartment of the pedlar, whom he found traversing the room in much agitation.

'You withdrew yourself suddenly from the company,' said the landlord to the guest.

'It was time, when the devil became one among you,' replied the pedlar.

'It is not courteous in you to term my nephew by such a name,' said Gosling, 'nor is it kindly in me to reply to it, and yet, in some sort, Mike may be considered as a limb of Satan.'

'Pooh, I talk not of the swaggering ruffian,' replied the pedlar, 'it is of the other, who, for aught I know — But when go they? or wherefore come they?'

'Marry, these are questions I cannot answer,' replied the host. 'But look you, sir, you have brought me a token from worthy Master Tressilian — a pretty stone it is.' He took out the ring, and looked at it, adding, as he put it into his purse again, that it was too rich a guerdon for anything he could do for the worthy donor. He was, he said, in the public line, and it ill became him to be too inquisitive into other folks' concerns, he had already said that he could hear nothing but that the lady lived still at Cummoir Place, in the closest seclusion, and, to such as by chance had a view of her, seemed pensive, and discontented with her solitude. 'But here,' he said, 'if you are desirous to gratify your master, is the rarest chance that hath occurred for this many a day. Tony Foster is coming down hither, and it is but letting Mike Lambourne smell another wine-flask, and the Queen's command would not move him from the ale-bench. So they are fast for an hour or so. Now, if you will don your pack, which will be your best excuse, you may, perchance, win the ear of the old servant, being assured of the master's absence, to let you try to get some custom of the lady, and then you may learn more of her condition than I or any other can tell you.'

'True — very true,' answered Wayland, for he it was, 'an

excellent device, but methinks something dangerous, for, say Foster should return ?'

'Very possible indeed,' replied the host.

'Or say,' continued Wayland, 'the lady should render me cold thanks for my exertions ?'

'As is not unlikely,' replied Giles Goshing 'I marvel Master Tressilian will take such heed of her that cares not for him.'

'In either case I were foully sped,' said Wayland, 'and therefore I do not, on the whole, much relish your device.'

'Nay, but take me with you, good master serving man,' replied mine host, 'this is your master's business and not mine, you best know the risk to be encountered, or how far you are willing to brave it. But that which you will not yourself hazard, you cannot expect others to risk.'

'Hold — hold,' said Wayland, 'tell me but one thing. Goes yonder old man up to Cumnor ?'

'Surely, I think so,' said the landlord, 'their servant said he was to take their baggage thither, but the ale tap has been as potent for him as the sack-spigot has been for Michael.'

'It is enough,' said Wayland, assuming an air of resolution — 'I will thwart that old villain's projects, my affright at his baleful aspect begins to abate, and my hatred to arise. Help me on with my pack, good mine host. And look to thyself, old Albumazar there is a malignant influence in thy horoscope, and it gleams from the constellation Ursa Major.'

So saying, he assumed his burden, and, guided by the landlord through the postern gate of the Black Bear, took the most private way from thence up to Cumnor Place.

CHAPTER XX

Clown You have of these pedlars, that have more in em than you'd think,
sister

Waverley Tale, Act IV. Scene 3

IN his anxiety to obey the earl's repeated charges of secrecy, as well as from his own unsocial and miserly habits, Anthony Foster was more desirous, by his mode of house-keeping, to escape observation than to resist intrusive curiosity. Thus, instead of a numerous household, to secure his charge and defend his house, he studied, as much as possible, to elude notice by diminishing his attendants so that, unless when there were followers of the earl or of Varney in the mansion, one old male domestic and two aged crones, who assisted in keeping the countess's apartments in order, were the only servants of the family.

It was one of these old women who opened the door when Wayland knocked, and answered his petition to be admitted to exhibit his wares to the ladies of the family with a volley of vituperation, couched in what is there called the 'jowring' dialect. The pedlar found the means of checking this vociferation by slipping a silver groat into her hand, and intimating the present of some stuff for a coif, if the lady would buy of his wares.

'God ield thee, for mine is aw in littocks. Slocket with thy pack into gharn, mon. Her walks in gharn.' Into the garden she ushered the pedlar accordingly, and pointing to an old ruinous garden-house, said, 'Yonder be's her, mon — yonder be's her. Zhe will buy changes an zhe loikes stuffs.'

'She has left me to come off as I may,' thought Wayland, as he heard the hag shut the garden door behind him. 'But they shall not beat me, and they dare not murder me for so little trespass, and by this fair twilight. Hang it, I will on — a brave general never thought of his retreat till he was defeated. I see two females in the old garden-house yonder, but how to

address them?' Stay — Will Shakspeare, be my friend in need! I will give them a taste of Autolycus.' He then sung with a good voice, and becoming audacity, the popular playhouse ditty —

'Lawn as white as driven snow,
Cyprus black as e'er was crow,
Gloves as sweet as damask roses,
Masks for faces and for noses.'

'What hath fortune sent us here for an unwonted sight, Janet?' said the lady

'One of those merchants of vanity, called pedlars,' answered Janet, demurely, 'who utters his light wares in lighter measures. I marvel old Dorcas let him pass.'

'It is a lucky chance, girl,' said the countess, 'we lead a heavy life here, and this may while off a weary hour'

'Ay, my gracious lady,' said Janet, 'but my father?'

'He is not *my* father, Janet, nor, I hope, my master,' answered the lady 'I say, call the man hither, I want some things'

'Nay,' replied Janet, 'your ladyship has just to say so in the next packet, and if England can furnish them they will be sent. There will come mischief on't. Pray, dearest lady, let me bid the man begone!'

'I will have thee bid him come hither,' said the countess, 'or stay, thou terrified fool, I will bid him myself, and spare thee a chiding'

'Ah! well-a-day, dearest lady, if that were the worst,' said Janet, sadly, while the lady called to the pedlar, 'Good fellow, step forward — undo thy pack, if thou hast good wares, chance has sent thee hither for my convenience and thy profit.'

'What may your ladyship please to lack?' said Wayland, unstrapping his pack, and displaying its contents with as much dexterity as if he had been bred to the trade. Indeed, he had occasionally pursued it in the course of his roving life, and now commended his wares with all the volubility of a trader, and showed some skill in the main art of placing prices upon them.

'What do I please to lack?' said the lady, 'why, considering I have not for six long months bought one yard of lawn or cambric, or one trinket, the most inconsiderable, for my own use, and at my own choice, the better question is, what hast thou got to sell? Lay aside for me that cambric partlet and pair of sleeves, and those roundells of gold fringe, drawn out

then asked, with a voice which she strove in vain to render firm and indifferant in its tone, 'Is the gentleman you have mentioned perfectly recovered?'

'Passably, madam,' answered Wayland. 'he hath at least no bodily complaint.'

'I will take some of the medicine, Janet,' said the countess. 'I too have sometimes that dark melancholy which overclouds the brain.'

'You shall not do so, madam,' said Janet. 'who shall answer that this fellow vends what is wholesome?'

'I will myself warrant my good faith,' said Wayland, and, taking a part of the medicine, he swallowed it before them. The countess now bought what remained, a step to which Janet, by farther objections, only determined her the more obstinately. She even took the first dose upon the instant, and professed to feel her heart lightened and her spirits augmented—a consequence which, in all probability, existed only in her own imagination. The lady then piled the purchases she had made together, flung her purse to Janet, and desired her to compute the amount and to pay the pedlar, while she herself, as if tired of the amusement she at first found in conversing with him, wished him good evening, and walked carelessly into the house, thus depriving Wayland of every opportunity to speak with her in private. He hastened, however, to attempt an explanation with Janet.

'Maiden,' he said, 'thou hast the face of one who should love her mistress. She hath much need of faithful service.'

'And well deserves it at my hands,' replied Janet, 'but what of that?'

'Maiden, I am not altogether what I seem,' said the pedlar, lowering his voice.

'The less like to be an honest man,' said Janet.

'The more so,' answered Wayland, 'since I am no pedlar.'

'Get thee gone then instantly, or I will call for assistance,' said Janet, 'my father must ere this time be returned.'

'Do not be so rash,' said Wayland, 'you will do what you may repent of. I am one of your mistress's friends, and she had need of more, not that thou shouldst ruin those she hath.'

'How shall I know that?' said Janet.

'Look me in the face,' said Wayland Smith, 'and see if thou dost not read honesty in my looks.'

And in truth, though by no means handsome, there was in his physiognomy the sharp, keen expression of inventive genius.



WHAT MAY YOUR LADYSHIP PLEASE TO LACK?"

with cyprus, and that short cloak of cherry-coloured fine cloth, garnished with gold buttons and loop—Is it not of an absolute fancy, Janet?’

‘Nay, my lady,’ replied Janet, ‘if you consult my poor judgment, it is, methinks, over gaudy for a graceful habit.’

‘Now, out upon thy judgment, if it be no brighter, wench,’ said the countess, ‘thou shalt wear it thyself for penance sake, and I promise thee the gold buttons, being somewhat massive, will comfort thy father, and reconcile him to the cherry-coloured body. See that he snap them not away, Janet, and send them to bear company with the imprisoned angels which he keeps captive in his strong box.’

‘May I pray your ladyship to spare my poor father!’ said Janet.

‘Nay, but why should any one spare him that is so sprung of his own nature?’ replied the lady. ‘Well, but to our gear! That head garniture for myself, and that silver bodkin, mounted with pearl, and take off two gowns of that russet cloth for Dorcas and Alison, Janet, to keep the old wretches warm against winter comes. And stay, hast thou no perfumes and sweet bags, or any handsome casting-bottles of the newest mode?’

‘Were I a pedlar in earnest, I were a made merchant,’ thought Wayland, as he busied himself to answer the demands which she thronged one on another, with the eagerness of a young lady who has been long secluded from such a pleasing occupation. ‘But how to bring her to a moment’s serious reflection?’ Then, as he exhibited his choicest collection of essences and perfumes, he at once arrested her attention by observing, that these articles had almost risen to double value, since the magnificent preparations made by the Earl of Leicester to entertain the Queen and court at his princely Castle of Kenilworth.

‘Ha!’ said the countess, hastily; ‘that rumour then is true, Janet.’

‘Surely, madam,’ answered Wayland, ‘and I marvel it hath not reached your noble ladyship’s ears. The Queen of England feasts with the noble earl for a week during the summer’s progress, and there are many who will tell you England will have a king, and England’s Elizabeth—God save her!—a husband, ere the progress be over.’

‘They be like villains!’ said the countess, bursting forth impatiently.

‘For God’s sake, madam, consider,’ said Janet, trembling with

apprehension, 'who would cumber themselves about pedlar's tidings?'

'Yes, Janet!' exclaimed the countess, 'right, thou hast corrected me justly. Such reports, blighting the reputation of England's brightest and noblest peer, can only find currency amongst the mean, the abject, and the infamous!'

'May I perish, lady,' said Wayland Smith, observing that her violence directed itself towards him, 'if I have done anything to merit this strange passion! I have said but what many men say.'

By this time the countess had recovered her composure, and endeavoured, alarmed by the anxious hints of Janet, to suppress all appearance of displeasure. 'I were loth,' she said, 'good fellow, that our Queen should change the virgin style, so dear to us her people — think not of it.' And then, as if desirous to change the subject, she added, 'And what is this paste, so carefully put up in the silver box?' as she examined the contents of a casket in which drugs and perfumes were contained in separate drawers.

'It is a remedy, madam, for a disorder of which I trust your ladyship will never have reason to complain. The amount of a small Turkey bean, swallowed daily for a week, fortifies the heart against those black vapours which arise from solitude, melancholy, unrequited affection, disappointed hope —'

'Are you a fool, friend?' said the countess, sharply, 'or do you think, because I have good-naturedly purchased your trumpery goods at your rogish prices, that you may put any gullery you will on me? Who ever heard that affections of the heart were cured by medicines given to the body?'

'Under your honourable favour,' said Wayland, 'I am an honest man, and I have sold my goods at an honest price. As to this most precious medicine, when I told its qualities, I asked you not to purchase it, so why should I lie to you? I say not it will cure a rooted affection of the mind, which only God and time can do, but I say, that this restorative relieves the black vapours which are engendered in the body of that melancholy which broodeth on the mind. I have relieved many with it, both in court and city, and of late one Master Edmund Trassilian, a worshipful gentleman in Cornwall, who, on some slight, received, it was told me, where he had set his affections was brought into that state of melancholy which made his friends alarmed for his life.'

He paused, and the lady remained silent for some time, and

and prompt intellect which, joined to quick and brilliant eyes, a well-formed mouth, and an intelligent smile, often gives grace and interest to features which are both homely and irregular Janet looked at him with the sly simplicity of her sect, and replied, 'Notwithstanding thy boasted honesty, friend, and although I am not accustomed to read and pass judgment on such volumes as thou hast submitted to my perusal, I think I see in thy countenance something of the pedlar — something of the picaroon.'

'On a small scale, perhaps,' said Wayland Smith, laughing 'But this evening, or to-morrow, will an old man come hither with thy father, who has the stealthy step of the cat, the shrewd and vindictive eye of the rat, the fawning wile of the spaniel, the determined snatch of the mastiff, of him beware, for your own sake and that of your mistress. See you, fair Janet, he brings the venom of the aspic under the assumed innocence of the dove. What precise mischief he meditates towards you I cannot guess, but death and disease have ever dogged his footsteps. Say nought of this to thy mistress my art suggests to me that in her state the fear of evil may be as dangerous as its operation. But see that she take my specific, for (he lowered his voice, and spoke low but impressively in her ear) it is an antidote against poison. Hark, they enter the garden!'

In effect, a sound of noisy mirth and loud talking approached the garden door, alarmed by which, Wayland Smith sprung into the midst of a thicket of overgrown shrubs, while Janet withdrew to the garden-house that she might not incur observation, and that she might at the same time conceal, at least for the present, the purchases made from the supposed pedlar, which lay scattered on the floor of the summer-house.

Janet, however, had no occasion for anxiety. Her father, his old attendant, Lord Leicester's domestic, and the astrologer entered the garden in tumult and in extreme perplexity, endeavouring to quiet Lambourne, whose brain had now become completely fired with liquor, and who was one of those unfortunate persons who, being once stirred with the vinous stimulus, do not fall asleep like other drunkards, but remain partially influenced by it for many hours, until at length, by successive draughts, they are elevated into a state of uncontrollable frenzy. Like many men in this state also, Lambourne neither lost the power of motion, speech, or expression, but, on the contrary, spoke with unwonted emphasis and readiness,

and told all that at another time he would have been most desirous to keep secret

'What!' ejaculated Michael, at the full extent of his voice, 'am I to have no welcome — no carouse, when I have brought fortune to your old ruinous dog-house in the shape of a devil's ally, that can change slate-shivers into Spanish dollars? Here, you Tony Fire-the-Fagot, Papist, Puritan, hypocrite, miser, profligate, devil, compounded of all men's sins, bow down and reverence him who has brought into thy house the very mammon thou worshippest!'

'For God's sake,' said Foster, 'speak low, come into the house, thou shalt have wine, or whatever thou wilt'

'No, old puckfist, I will have it here,' thundered the inebriated ruffian — 'here, *al fresco*, as the Italian hath it No — no, I will not drink with that poisoning devil within doors, to be choked with the fumes of arsenic and quicksilver, I learned from villain Varney to beware of that'

'Fetch him wine, in the name of all the fiends!' said the alchemist

'Aha' and thou wouldst spice it for me, old Truepenny, wouldst thou not? Ay, I should have copperas, and hellebore, and vitriol, and aquafortis, and twenty devilish materials, bubbling in my brain-pan, like a charm to raise the devil in a witch's cauldron Hand me the flask thyself, old Tony Fire-the-Fagot — and let it be cool, I will have no wine mulled at the pile of the old burnt bishops Or stay, let Leicester be king if he will — good — and Varney, villain Varney, grand vizier — why, excellent! And what shall I be, then? Why, emperor — Emperor Lambourne! I will see this choice piece of beauty that they have walled up here for their private pleasures, I will have her this very night to serve my wine-cup and put on my nightcap What should a fellow do with two wives, were he twenty times an earl? Answer me that, Tony boy, you old reprobate, hypocritical dog, whom God struck out of the book of life, but tormented with the constant wish to be restored to it You old bishop-burning, blasphemous fanatic, answer me that'

'I will stick my knife to the haft in him,' said Foster, in a low tone, which trembled with passion

'For the love of Heaven, no violence!' said the astrologer 'It cannot but be looked closely into Here, honest Lambourne, wilt thou pledge me to the health of the noble Earl of Leicester, and Master Richard Varney?'

‘I will, mine old Albumazar—I will, my trusty vender of ratsbane. I would kiss thee, mine honest infractor of the Lex Julia, as they said at Leyden, didst thou not flavour so damnably of sulphur and such fiendish apothecary’s stuff. Here goes it, *up sey es*—to Varney and Leicester! Two more noble, mounting spirits, and more dark-seeking, deep diving, high-flying, malicious, ambitious miscreants—well, I say no more, but I will whet my dagger on his heart-spone that refuses to pledge me! And so, my masters——’

Thus speaking, Lambourne exhausted the cup which the astrologer had handed to him, and which contained not wine, but distilled spirits. He swore half an oath, dropped the empty cup from his grasp, laid his hand on his sword without being able to draw it, reeled, and fell without sense or motion into the arms of the domestic, who dragged him off to his chamber and put him to bed.

In the general confusion, Janet regained her lady’s chamber unobserved, trembling like an aspen leaf, but determined to keep secret from the countess the dreadful surmises which she could not help entertaining from the drunken ravings of Lambourne. Her fears, however, though they assumed no certain shape, kept pace with the advice of the pedlar, and she confirmed her mistress in her purpose of taking the medicine which he had recommended, from which it is probable she would otherwise have dissuaded her.

Neither had these intimations escaped the ears of Wayland, who knew much better how to interpret them. He felt much compassion at beholding so lovely a creature as the countess, and whom he had first seen in the bosom of domestic happiness, exposed to the machinations of such a gang of villains. His indignation, too, had been highly excited by hearing the voice of his old master, against whom he felt, in equal degree, the passions of hatred and fear. He nourished also a pride in his own art and resources, and, dangerous as the task was, he that night formed a determination to attain the bottom of the mystery, and to aid the distressed lady, if it were yet possible. From some words which Lambourne had dropped among his ravings, Wayland now, for the first time, felt inclined to doubt that Varney had acted entirely on his own account in wooing and winning the affections of this beautiful creature. Fame asserted of this zealous retainer that he had accommodated his lord in former love intrigues, and it occurred to Wayland Smith that Leicester himself might be the party chiefly interested. Her

marriage with the earl he could not suspect, but even the discovery of such a passing intrigue with a lady of Mistress Amy Robsart's rank was a secret of the deepest importance to the stability of the favourite's power over Elizabeth. 'If Leicester himself should hesitate to stifle such a rumour by very strange means,' said he to himself, 'he has those about him who would do him that favour without waiting for his consent. If I would meddle in this business, it must be in such guise as my old master uses when he compounds his manna of Satan, and that is with a close mask on my face. So I will quit Giles Gosling to-morrow, and change my course and place of residence as often as a hunted fox. I should like to see this little Puritan, too, once more. She looks both pretty and intelligent, to have come of such a cartiff as Anthony Fire-the-Fagot.'

Giles Gosling received the adieus of Wayland rather joyfully than otherwise. The honest publican saw so much peril in crossing the course of the Earl of Leicester's favourite, that his virtue was scarce able to support him in the task, and he was well pleased when it was likely to be removed from his shoulders, still, however, professing his good-will and readiness, in case of need, to do Master Tressilian or his emissary any service, in so far as consisted with his character of a publican.

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CHAPTER XXI

Vaulting ambition, that o'erleaps itself,
And falls on the other side

Macbeth

THE splendour of the approaching revels at Kenilworth was now the conversation through all England, and everything was collected at home or from abroad which could add to the gaiety or glory of the prepared reception of Elizabeth at the house of her most distinguished favourite. Meantime, Leicester appeared daily to advance in the Queen's favour. He was perpetually by her side in council, willingly listened to in the moments of courtly recreation, favoured with approaches even to familiar intimacy, looked up to by all who had aught to hope at court, courted by foreign ministers with the most flattering testimonies of respect from their sovereigns — the *alter ego*, as it seemed, of the stately Elizabeth, who was now very generally supposed to be studying the time and opportunity for associating him, by marriage, into her sovereign power.

Amid such a tide of prosperity, this minion of fortune and of the Queen's favour was probably the most unhappy man in the realm which seemed at his devotion. He had the Fairy King's superiority over his friends and dependants, and saw much which they could not. The character of his mistress was intimately known to him — it was his minute and studied acquaintance with her humours, as well as her noble faculties, which, joined to his powerful mental qualities and his eminent external accomplishments, had raised him so high in her favour, and it was that very knowledge of her disposition which led him to apprehend at every turn some sudden and overwhelming disgrace. Leicester was like a pilot possessed of a chart, which points out to him all the peculiarities of his navigation, but which exhibits so many shoals, breakers, and reefs of rocks that his anxious eye reaps little more from observing them than to be convinced that his final escape can be little else than miraculous.

In fact, Queen Elizabeth had a character strangely compounded of the strongest masculine sense with those foibles which are chiefly supposed proper to the female sex. Her subjects had the full benefit of her virtues, which far predominated over her weaknesses, but her courtiers and those about her person had often to sustain sudden and embarrassing turns of caprice and the sallies of a temper which was both jealous and despotic. She was the nursing-mother of her people, but she was also the true daughter of Henry VIII, and though early sufferings and an excellent education had repressed and modified, they had not altogether destroyed, the hereditary temper of that 'hard-ruled king.' 'Her mind,' says her witty godson, Sir John Harrington, who had experienced both the smiles and the frowns which he describes, 'was ofttime like the gentle air, that cometh from the western point in a summer's morn 'twas sweet and refreshing to all around her. Her speech did win all affections. And again, she could put forth such alterations, when obedience was lacking, as left no doubting *whose* daughter she was. When she smiled, it was a pure sunshine, that every one did choose to bask in, if they could, but anon came a storm, from a sudden gathering of clouds, and the thunder fell in a wondrous manner on all alike.'¹

This variability of disposition, as Leicester well knew, was chiefly formidable to those who had a share in the Queen's affections, and who depended rather on her personal regard than on the indispensable services which they could render to her councils and her crown. The favour of Burleigh or of Walsingham, of a description far less striking than that by which he was himself upheld, was founded, as Leicester was well aware, on Elizabeth's solid judgment, not on her partiality, and was, therefore, free from all those principles of change and decay necessarily incident to that which chiefly arose from personal accomplishments and female predilection. These great and sage statesmen were judged of by the Queen only with reference to the measures they suggested, and the reasons by which they supported their opinions in council, whereas the success of Leicester's course depended on all those light and changeable gales of caprice and humour which thwart or favour the progress of a lover in the favour of his mistress, and she, too, a mistress who was ever and anon becoming fearful lest she should forget the dignity, or compromise the authority, of the queen while she indulged the affections of the woman. Of the difficulties which surrounded

¹ *Nugæ Antiquæ*, vol 1, pp 355-362

his power, 'too great to keep or to resign,' Leicester was fully sensible, and, as he looked anxiously round for the means of maintaining himself in his precarious situation, and sometimes contemplated those of descending from it in safety, he saw but little hope of either. At such moments, his thoughts turned to dwell upon his secret marriage and its consequences, and it was in bitterness against himself, if not against his unfortunate countess, that he ascribed to that hasty measure, adopted in the ardour of what he now called inconsiderate passion, at once the impossibility of placing his power on a solid basis and the immediate prospect of its precipitate downfall.

'Men say,' thus ran his thoughts, in these anxious and repentant moments, 'that I might marry Elizabeth, and become King of England. All things suggest this. The match is carolled in ballads, while the rabble throw their caps up. It has been touched upon in the schools—whispered in the presence-chamber—recommended from the pulpit—prayed for in the Calvinistic churches abroad—touched on by statists in the very council at home. These bold insinuations have been rebutted by no rebuke, no resentment, no chiding, scarce even by the usual female protestation that she would live and die a virgin princess. Her words have been more courteous than ever, though she knows such rumours are abroad—her actions more gracious—her looks more kind. Nought seems wanting to make me King of England, and place me beyond the storms of court favour, excepting the putting forth of mine own hand to take that crown imperial which is the glory of the universe! And when I might stretch that hand out most boldly, it is fettered down by a secret and inextricable bond! And here I have letters from Amy,' he would say, catching them up with a movement of peevishness, 'persecuting me to acknowledge her openly—to do justice to her and to myself—and I wot not what. Methinks I have done less than justice to myself already. And she speaks as if Elizabeth were to receive the knowledge of this matter with the glee of a mother hearing of the happy marriage of a hopeful son! She, the daughter of Henry, who spared neither man in his anger nor woman in his desire—she to find herself tricked, drawn on with toys of passion to the verge of acknowledging her love to a subject, and he discovered to be a married man! Elizabeth to learn that she had been dallied with in such fashion, as a gay courtier might trifle with a country wench. We should then see to our ruin *furens quid fœmina!*'

He would then pause, and call for Varney, whose advice was now more frequently resorted to than ever, because the earl remembered the remonstrances which he had made against his secret contract. And then consultation usually terminated in anxious deliberation how, or in what manner, the countess was to be produced at Kenilworth. These communings had for some time ended always in a resolution to delay the progress from day to day. But at length a peremptory decision became necessary.

'Elizabeth will not be satisfied without her presence,' said the earl; 'whether any suspicion hath entered her mind, as my own apprehensions suggest, or whether the petition of Tressilian is kept in her memory by Sussex or some other secret enemy, I know not, but amongst all the favourable expressions which she uses to me, she often recurs to the story of Amy Robsart. I think that Amy is the slave in the chariot, who is placed there by my evil fortune to dash and to confound my triumph, even when at the highest. Show me thy device, Varney, for solving the inextricable difficulty. I have thrown every such impediment in the way of these accursed revels as I could propound even with a shade of decency, but to-day's interview has put all to a hazard. She said to me kindly but peremptorily, "We will give you no farther time for preparations, my lord, lest you should altogether ruin yourself. On Saturday, the 9th of July, we will be with you at Kenilworth. We pray you to forget none of our appointed guests and suitors, and in especial this light o' love, Amy Robsart. We would wish to see the woman who could postpone yonder poetical gentleman, Master Tressilian, to your man, Richard Varney." Now, Varney, ply thine invention, whose forge hath availed us so often, for sure as my name is Dudley, the danger menaced by my horoscope is now darkening around me.'

'Can my lady be by no means persuaded to bear for a brief space the obscure character which circumstances impose on her?' said Varney, after some hesitation.

'How, sirrah! my countess term herself *thy* wife! that may neither stand with my honour nor with hers.'

'Alas! my lord,' answered Varney, 'and yet such is the quality in which Elizabeth now holds her, and to contradict this opinion is to discover all.'

'Think of something else, Varney,' said the earl, in great agitation, 'this invention is naught. If I could give way to it, she would not, for I tell thee, Varney, if thou know'st it not,

that not Elizabeth on the throne has more pride than the daughter of this obscure gentleman of Devon. She is flexible in many things, but where she holds her honour brought in question she hath a spirit and temper as apprehensive as lightning, and as swift in execution.

'We have experienced that, my lord, else had we not been thus circumstanced,' said Varney. 'But what else to suggest I know not. Methinks she whose good fortune in becoming your lordship's bride and who gives rise to the danger should do somewhat towards parrying it.'

'It is impossible,' said the earl, waving his hand. 'I know neither authority nor entreaties would make her endure thy name for an hour.'

'It is somewhat hard, though,' said Varney, in a dry tone, and, without pausing on that topic, he added, 'Suppose some one were found to represent her? Such feats have been performed in the courts of as sharp eyed monarchs as Queen Elizabeth.'

'Utter madness, Varney,' answered the earl, 'the counterfeited would be confronted with Tressilian, and discovery become inevitable.'

'Tressilian might be removed from court,' said the unhesitating Varney.

'And by what means?'

'There are many,' said Varney, 'by which a statesman in your situation, my lord, may remove from the scene one who pries into your affairs, and places himself in perilous opposition to you.'

'Speak not to me of such policy, Varney,' said the earl, hastily, 'which, besides, would avail nothing in the present case. Many others there be at court to whom Amy may be known, and besides, on the absence of Tressilian, her father or some of her friends would be instantly summoned hither. Urge thine invention once more.'

'My lord, I know not what to say,' answered Varney, 'but were I myself in such perplexity, I would ride post down to Cumnor Place and compel my wife to give her consent to such measures as her safety and mine required.'

'Varney,' said Leicester, 'I cannot urge her to aught so repugnant to her noble nature as a share in this stratagem. It would be a base requital for the love she bears me.'

'Well, my lord,' said Varney, 'your lordship is a wise and an honourable man, and skilled in those high points of romantic

scruple which are current in Arcadia, perhaps, as your nephew, Philip Sidney, writes I am your humble servitor—a man of this world, and only happy that my knowledge of it and its ways is such as your lordship has not scorned to avail yourself of. Now I would fain know whether the obligation lies on my lady or on you in this fortunate union, and which has most reason to show complaisance to the other, and to consider that other's wishes, conveniences, and safety?'

'I tell thee, Varney,' said the earl, 'that all it was in my power to bestow upon her was not merely deserved, but a thousand times overpaid, by her own virtue and beauty, for never did greatness descend upon a creature so formed by nature to grace and adorn it'

'It is well, my lord, you are so satisfied,' answered Varney, with his usual sardonic smile, which even respect to his patron could not at all times subdue, 'you will have time enough to enjoy undisturbed the society of one so gracious and beautiful—that is, so soon as such confinement in the Tower be over as may correspond to the crime of deceiving the affections of Elizabeth Tudor. A cheaper penalty, I presume, you do not expect?'

'Malicious fiend!' answered Leicester, 'do you mock me in my misfortune? Manage it as thou wilt'

'If you are serious, my lord,' said Varney, 'you must set forth instantly and post for Cumnor Place'

'Do thou go thyself, Varney the devil has given thee that sort of eloquence which is most powerful in the worst cause I should stand self-convicted of villany were I to urge such a decent. Begone, I tell thee. Must I entreat thee to mine own dishonour!'

'No, my lord,' said Varney, 'but, if you are serious in entrusting me with the task of urging this most necessary measure, you must give me a letter to my lady as my credentials, and trust to me for backing the advice it contains with all the force in my power. And such is my opinion of my lady's love for your lordship, and of her willingness to do that which is at once to contribute to your pleasure and your safety, that I am sure she will condescend to bear, for a few brief days, the name of so humble a man as myself, especially since it is not inferior in antiquity to that of her own paternal house'

Leicester seized on writing-materials, and twice or thrice commenced a letter to the countess, which he afterwards tore into fragments. At length he finished a few distracted lines,

Lord Leicester to the point which he had desired, of committing to him the most intimate recesses of his breast, and of using him as the channel of his most confidential intercourse with his lady. Henceforward it would, he foresaw, be difficult for his patron either to dispense with his services or refuse his requests, however unreasonable. And if this disdainful dame, as he termed the countess, should comply with the request of her husband, Varney, her pretended husband, must needs become so situated with respect to her that there was no knowing where his audacity might be bounded, perhaps not till circumstances enabled him to obtain a triumph which he thought of with a mixture of fiendish feelings, in which revenge for her previous scorn was foremost and predominant. Again he contemplated the possibility of her being totally intractable, and refusing obstinately to play the part assigned to her in the drama at Kenilworth.

‘Alas! must then do his part,’ he said. ‘Sickness must serve her Majesty as an excuse for not receiving the homage of Mrs. Varney — ay, and a sore and wasting sickness it may prove, should Elizabeth continue to cast so favourable an eye on my Lord of Leicester. I will not forego the chance of being favourite of a monarch for want of determined measures, should these be necessary. Forward, good horse — forward ambition, and haughty hope of power, pleasure, and revenge, strike their stings as deep through my bosom as I plunge the rowels in thy flanks. On, good horse — on the devil urges us both forward.’

CHAPTER XXII

Say that my beauty was but small,
Among court ladies all despised,
Why didst thou rend it from that hall,
Where, scornful earl, 't was dearly prized ?

No more thou com'st with wonted speed,
Thy once beloved bride to see,
But be she alive, or be she dead,
I fear, stern earl, 's the same to thee

Cumnor Hall, by WILLIAM JULIUS MICKLE.

THE ladies of fashion of the present, or of any other, period must have allowed that the young and lovely Countess of Leicester had, besides her youth and beauty, two qualities which entitled her to a place amongst women of rank and distinction. She displayed, as we have seen in her interview with the pedlar, a liberal promptitude to make unnecessary purchases, solely for the pleasure of acquiring useless and showy trifles, which ceased to please as soon as they were possessed, and she was, besides, apt to spend a considerable space of time every day in adorning her person, although the varied splendour of her attire could only attract the half-satirical praise of the precise Janet, or an approving glance from the bright eyes which witnessed their own beams of triumph reflected from the mirror.

The Countess Amy had, indeed, to plead for indulgence in those frivolous tastes, that the education of the times had done little or nothing for a mind naturally gay and averse to study. If she had not loved to collect finery and to wear it, she might have woven tapestry or sewed embroidery, till her labours spread in gay profusion all over the walls and seats at Ladcote Hall, or she might have varied Minerva's labours with the task of preparing a mighty pudding against the time that Sir Hugh Robsart returned from the greenwood. But Amy had no natural genius either for the loom, the needle, or the receipt-

book. Her mother had died in [Amy's] infancy; her father contradicted her in nothing, and Tressilian, the only one that approached her who was able or desirous to attend to the cultivation of her mind, had much hurt his interest with her by assuming too eagerly the task of a preceptor, so that he was regarded by the lively, indulged, and idle girl with some fear and much respect, but with little or nothing of that softer emotion which it had been his hope and his ambition to inspire. And thus her heart lay readily open, and her fancy became easily captivated by the noble exterior and graceful deportment and complacent flattery of Leicester, even before he was known to her as the dazzling minion of wealth and power.

The frequent visits of Leicester at Cumnor during the earlier part of their union had reconciled the countess to the solitude and privacy to which she was condemned, but when these visits became rarer and more rare, and when the void was filled up with letters of excuse, not always very warmly expressed, and generally extremely brief, discontent and suspicion began to haunt those splendid apartments which love had fitted up for beauty. Her answers to Leicester conveyed these feelings too bluntly, and pressed more naturally than prudently that she might be relieved from this obscure and secluded residence by the earl's acknowledgment of their marriage, and in arranging her arguments, with all the skill she was mistress of, she trusted chiefly to the warmth of the entreaties with which she urged them. Sometimes she even ventured to mingle reproaches, of which Leicester conceived he had good reason to complain.

'I have made her countess,' he said to Varney, 'surely she might wait till it consisted with my pleasure that she should put on the coronet?'

The Countess Amy viewed the subject in directly an opposite light.

'What signifies,' she said, 'that I have rank and honour in reality, if I am to live an obscure prisoner, without either society or observance, and suffering in my character as one of dubious or disgraced reputation? I care not for all those strings of pearl which you fret me by warping into my tresses, Janet. I tell you that, at Lincote Hall, if I put but a fresh rose-bud among my hair, my good father would call me to him that he might see it more closely, and the kind old curate would smile, and Master Mumblazen would say something about roses gules; and now I sit here, decked out like an

image with gold and gems, and no one to see my finery but you, Janet. There was the poor Tressilian, too, but it avails not speaking of him.'

'It doth not indeed, madam,' said her prudent attendant, 'and verily you make me sometimes wish you would not speak of him so often or so rashly.'

'It signifies nothing to warn me, Janet,' said the impatient and incorrigible countess, 'I was born free, though I am now mewed up like some fine foreign slave, rather than the wife of an English noble. I bore it all with pleasure while I was sure he loved me, but now my tongue and heart shall be free, let them fetter these limbs as they will. I tell thee, Janet, I love my husband—I will love him till my latest breath—I cannot cease to love him, even if I would, or if he—which, God knows, may chance—should cease to love me. But I will say, and loudly, I would have been happier than I now am to have remained in Ladcote Hall, even although I must have married poor Tressilian, with his melancholy look, and his head full of learning, which I cared not for. He said, if I would read his favourite volumes, there would come a time that I should be glad of having done so. I think it is come now.'

'I bought you some books, madam,' said Janet, 'from a lame fellow who sold them in the market-place, and who stared something boldly at me, I promise you.'

'Let me see them, Janet,' said the countess, 'but let them not be of your own precise cast. How is this, most righteous damsel? *A Pair of Snuffers for the Golden Candlestick—A Handful of Myrrh and Hyssop to put a Sick Soul to Purgation—A Draught of Water from the Valley of Baca—Foxes and Firebrands*. What gear call you this, maiden?'

'Nay, madam,' said Janet, 'it was but fitting and seemly to put grace in your ladyship's way, but an you will none of it, there are play-books and poet-books, I trow.'

The countess proceeded carelessly in her examination, turning over such rare volumes as would now make the fortune of twenty retail booksellers. Here was a *Boke of Cookery*, imprinted by Richard Lant, and Skelton's *Books—The Pastime of the People—The Castle of Knowledge*, etc. But neither to this lore did the countess's heart incline, and joyfully did she start up from the listless task of turning over the leaves of the pamphlets, and hastily did she scatter them through the floor, when the hasty clatter of horses' feet, heard

in the courtyard, called her to the window, exclaiming, 'It is Leicester! — it is my noble earl! — it is my Dudley! Every stroke of his horse's hoof sounds like a note of lordly music!'

There was a brief bustle in the mansion, and Foster, with his downward look and sullen manner, entered the apartment to say, 'That Master Richard Varney was arrived from my lord, having ridden all night, and craved to speak with her ladyship instantly.'

'Varney!' said the disappointed countess, 'and to speak with me! — pshaw! But he comes with news from Leicester, so admit him instantly.'

Varney entered the dressing-apartment, where she sat arrayed in her native loveliness, adorned with all that Janet's art, and a rich and tasteful undress, could bestow. But the most beautiful part of her attire was her profuse and luxuriant light-brown locks, which floated in such rich abundance around a neck that resembled a swan's, and over a bosom heaving with anxious expectation, which communicated a hurried tinge of red to her whole countenance.

Varney entered the room in the dress in which he had waited on his master that morning to court, the splendour of which made a strange contrast with the disorder arising from hasty riding during a dark night and foul ways. His brow wore an anxious and hurried expression, as one who has that to say of which he doubts the reception, and who hath yet posted on from the necessity of communicating his tidings. The countess's anxious eye at once caught the alarm as she exclaimed, 'You bring news from my lord, Master Varney? Gracious Heaven! is he ill?'

'No, madam, thank Heaven!' said Varney. 'Compose yourself, and permit me to take breath ere I communicate my tidings.'

'No breath, sir,' replied the lady, impatiently, 'I know your theatrical arts. Since your breath hath sufficed to bring you hither, it may suffice to tell your tale, at least briefly, and in the gross.'

'Madam,' answered Varney, 'we are not alone, and my lord's message was for your ear only.'

'Leave us, Janet, and Master Foster,' said the lady, 'but remain in the next apartment, and within call.'

Foster and his daughter retired, agreeably to the Lady Leicester's commands, into the next apartment, which was the withdrawing-room. The door which led from the sleeping-

chamber was then carefully shut and bolted, and the father and daughter remained both in a posture of anxious attention, the first with a stern, suspicious, lowering cast of countenance, and Janet with folded hands, and looks which seemed divided betwixt her desire to know the fortunes of her mistress and her prayers to Heaven for her safety. Anthony Foster seemed himself to have some idea of what was passing through his daughter's mind, for he crossed the apartment and took her anxiously by the hand, saying, 'That is right pray, Janet—pray, we have all need of prayers, and some of us more than others. Pray, Janet, I would pray myself, but I must listen to what goes on within. evil has been brewing, love—evil has been brewing. God forgive our sins, but Varney's sudden and strange arrival bodes us no good.'

Janet had never before heard her father excite or even permit her attention to anything which passed in their mysterious family, and now that he did so, his voice sounded in her ear—she knew not why—like that of a screech owl denouncing some deed of terror and of woe. She turned her eyes fearfully towards the door, almost as if she expected some sounds of horror to be heard, or some sight of fear to display itself.

All, however, was as still as death, and the voices of those who spoke in the inner chamber were, if they spoke at all, carefully subdued to a tone which could not be heard in the next. At once, however, they were heard to speak fast, thick, and hastily, and presently after the voice of the countess was heard exclaiming, at the highest pitch to which indignation could raise it, 'Undo the door, sir, I command you! Undo the door! I will have no other reply!' she continued, drowning with her vehement accents the low and muttered sounds which Varney was heard to utter betwixt whiles. 'What ho! without there!' she persisted, accompanying her words with shrieks, 'Janet, alarm the house. Foster, break open the door. I am detained here by a traitor. Use axe and lever, Master Foster—I will be your warrant.'

'It shall not need, madam,' Varney was at length distinctly heard to say. 'If you please to expose my lord's important concerns and your own to the general ear, I will not be your hindrance.'

The door was unlocked and thrown open, and Janet and her father rushed in, anxious to learn the cause of these reiterated exclamations.

When they entered the apartment, Varney stood by the

door grinding his teeth, with an expression in which rage, and shame, and fear, had each their share. The countess stood in the midst of her apartment like a juvenile pythoress, under the influence of the prophetic fury. The veins in her beautiful forehead started into swollen blue lines through the hurried impulse of her articulation, her cheek and neck glowed like scarlet, her eyes were like those of an unprisoned eagle, flashing red lightning on the foes whom it cannot reach with its talons. Were it possible for one of the Graces to have been animated by a Fury, the countenance could not have united such beauty with so much hatred, scorn, defiance, and resentment. The gesture and attitude corresponded with the voice and looks, and altogether presented a spectacle which was at once beautiful and fearful, so much of the sublime had the energy of passion united with the Countess Amy's natural loveliness. Janet, as soon as the door was open, ran to her mistress; and more slowly, yet with more haste than he was wont, Anthony Foster went to Richard Varney.

'In the Truth's name, what ails your ladyship?' said the former.

'What, in the name of Satan, have you done to her?' said Foster to his friend.

'Who, I? — nothing,' answered Varney, but with sunken head and sullen voice — 'nothing but communicated to her her lord's commands, which, if the lady list not to obey, she knows better how to answer it than I may pretend to do.'

'Now, by Heaven, Janet,' said the countess, 'the false traitor lies in his throat! He must needs lie, for he speaks to the dishonour of my noble lord, he must needs lie doubly, for he speaks to gain ends of his own, equally execrable and unattainable.'

'You have misapprehended me, lady,' said Varney, with a sulky species of submission and apology, 'let this matter rest till your passion be abated, and I will explain all.'

'Thou shalt never have an opportunity to do so,' said the countess. 'Look at him, Janet. He is fairly dressed, hath the outside of a gentleman, and hither he came to persuade me it was my lord's pleasure — nay, more, my wedded lord's commands — that I should go with him to Kenilworth, and before the Queen and nobles, and in presence of my own wedded lord, that I should acknowledge him — *him* there, that very cloak-brushing, shoe-cleaning fellow — *him* there, my lord's lackey, for my liege lord and husband, furnishing against myself, great God! whenever I was to vindicate my right and my rank,

such weapons as would hew my just claim from the root, and destroy my character to be regarded as an honourable matron of the English nobility !’

‘You hear her, Foster, and you, young maiden, hear this lady,’ answered Varney, taking advantage of the pause which the countess had made in her charge, more for lack of breath than for lack of matter — ‘you hear that her heat only objects to me the course which our good lord, for the purpose to keep certain matters secret, suggests in the very letter which she holds in her hands’

Foster here attempted to interfere with a face of authority, which he thought became the charge intrusted to him. ‘Nay, lady, I must needs say you are over hasty in this. Such deceit is not utterly to be condemned when practised for a righteous end, and thus even the patriarch Abraham feigned Sarah to be his sister when they went down to Egypt’

‘Ay, sir,’ answered the countess, ‘but God rebuked that deceit even in the father of his chosen people, by the mouth of the heathen Pharaoh. Out upon you, that will read Scripture only to copy those things which are held out to us as warnings, not as examples !’

‘But Sarah disputed not the will of her husband, an it be your pleasure,’ said Foster, in reply, ‘but did as Abraham commanded, calling herself his sister, that it might be well with her husband for her sake, and that his soul might live because of her beauty’

‘Now, so Heaven pardon me my useless anger,’ answered the countess, ‘thou art as daring a hypocrite as yonder fellow is an impudent deceiver ! Never will I believe that the noble Dudley gave countenance to so dastardly, so dishonourable a plan. Thus I tread on his infamy, if indeed it be, and thus destroy its remembrance for ever !’

So saying, she tore in pieces Leicester’s letter, and stamped, in the extremity of impatience, as if she would have annihilated the minute fragments into which she had rent it.

‘Bear witness,’ said Varney, collecting himself, ‘she hath torn my lord’s letter, in order to burden me with the scheme of his devising, and although it promises nought but danger and trouble to me, she would lay it to my charge, as if I had any purpose of mine own in it.’

‘Thou heest, thou treacherous slave !’ said the countess, in spite of Janet’s attempts to keep her silent, in the sad foresight that her vehemence might only furnish arms against herself.

'Thou liest!' she continued 'Let me go, Janet. Were it the last word I have to speak, he lies—he had his own foul ends to seek, and broader he would have displayed them, had my passion permitted me to preserve the silence which at first encouraged him to unfold his vile projects'

'Madam,' said Varney, overwhelmed in spite of his effrontery, 'I entreat you to believe yourself mistaken.'

'As soon will I believe light darkness,' said the enraged countess 'Have I drank of oblivion? Do I not remember former passages, which, known to Leicester, had given thee the preferment of a gallows, instead of the honour of his intimacy? I would I were a man but for five minutes! It were space enough to make a craven like thee confess his villany But go—begone! Tell thy master that, when I take the foul course to which such scandalous deceits as thou hast recommended on his behalf must necessarily lead me, I will give him a rival something worthy of the name He shall not be supplanted by an ignominious lackey, whose best fortune is to catch a gift of his master's last suit of clothes ere it is threadbare, and who is only fit to seduce a suburb wench by the bravery of new roses in his master's old pantoufles Go—begone, sir, I scorn thee so much that I am ashamed to have been angry with thee'

Varney left the room with a mute expression of rage, and was followed by Foster, whose apprehension, naturally slow, was overpowered by the eager and abundant discharge of indignation, which, for the first time, he had heard burst from the lips of a being who had seemed till that moment too languid and too gentle to nurse an angry thought or utter an intemperate expression. Foster, therefore, pursued Varney from place to place, persecuting him with interrogatories, to which the other replied not until they were in the opposite side of the quadrangle, and in the old library, with which the reader has already been made acquainted. Here he turned round on his persevering follower, and thus addressed him, in a tone tolerably equal, that brief walk having been sufficient to give one so habituated to command his temper time to rally and recover his presence of mind.

'Tony,' he said, with his usual sneering laugh, 'it avails not to deny it—the woman and the devil, who, as thine oracle Holdforth will confirm to thee, cheated man at the beginning, have this day proved more powerful than my discretion Yon termagant looked so tempting, and had the art to preserve

her countenance so naturally, while I communicated my lord's message, that, by my faith, I thought I might say some little thing for myself. She thinks she hath my head under her girdle now, but she is deceived. Where is Doctor Alasco ?'

'In his laboratory,' answered Foster, 'it is the hour he is spoken not withal, we must wait till noon is past, or spoil his important—— What said I, important? I would say, interrupt his divine studies.'

'Ay, he studies the devil's divinity,' said Varney, 'but when I want him one hour must suffice as well as another. Lead the way to his pandemonium.'

So spoke Varney, and with hasty and perturbed steps followed Foster, who conducted him through private passages, many of which were wellnigh ruinous, to the opposite side of the quadrangle, where, in a subterranean apartment, now occupied by the chemist Alasco, one of the abbots of Abingdon, who had a turn for the occult sciences, had, much to the scandal of his convent, established a laboratory, in which, like other fools of the period, he spent much precious time, and money besides, in the pursuit of the grand arcanum.

Anthony Foster paused before the door, which was scrupulously secured within, and again showed a marked hesitation to disturb the sage in his operations. But Varney, less scrupulous, roused him, by knocking and voice, until at length, slowly and reluctantly, the inmate of the apartment undid the door. The chemist appeared, with his eyes bleared with the heat and vapours of the stove or alembic over which he brooded, and the interior of his cell displayed the confused assemblage of heterogeneous substances and extraordinary implements belonging to his profession. The old man was muttering, with spiteful impatience, 'Am I for ever to be recalled to the affairs of earth from those of heaven?'

'To the affairs of hell,' answered Varney, 'for that is thy proper element. Foster, we need thee at our conference.'

Foster slowly entered the room. Varney, following, barred the door, and they betook themselves to secret council.

In the meanwhile, the countess traversed the apartment, with shame and anger contending on her lovely cheek.

'The villain,' she said — 'the cold blooded, calculating slave! But I unmasked him, Janet — I made the snake uncoil all his folds before me, and crawl abroad in his naked deformity. I suspended my resentment, at the danger of suffocating under

the effort, until he had let me to the very bottom of a heart more foul than hell—dark, black, and cold. And then, I wonder, is it possible thou couldst bid me to remain out doors, in the cold night right in thee, or thyself? It is a great deal to ask. But it is impossible—the villain has bid me—*I must!* I will not remain here longer—I fear him—I fear thy father, I know to what end, but I fear thy father, and I will not let thee, the whole way. I will escape from Cumnor.

‘Alas’ madam, whither would you fly, or by what means will you escape from the evil men?’

‘I know not, Janet,’ said the wild and mettle young lady, looking upwards and clasping her hand together. ‘I know not where I shall fly, or by what means—but I am certain the God I have served will not abandon me in this dreadful crisis, for I am in the hands of wicked men.’

‘Do not think so, dear lady,’ said Janet, ‘my father is stern and strict in his temper, and severely true to his trust, but yet——’

At this moment, Anthony Pott entered the apartment bearing in his hand a glass cup and a small flask. His manner was singular, for, while approaching the countess with the respect due to her rank, he had till this time suffered to become visible, or had been unable to suppress the obdurate sulkiness of his natural disposition, which as is usual with those of his unhappy temper, was chiefly exerted towards those over whom circumstances gave him control. But at present he showed nothing of that sullen consciousness of authority which he was wont to conceal under a clumsy affectation of civility and deference, as a ruffian hides his pistols and bludgeon under his ill-fashioned gaberdine. And yet it seemed as if his smile was more in fear than courtesy, and as if, while he pressed the countess to taste of the choice cordial, which should refresh her spirits after her late alarm, he was conscious of meditating some farther injury. His hand trembled also, his voice faltered, and his whole outward behaviour exhibited so much that was suspicious, that his daughter Janet, after she had stood looking at him in astonishment for some seconds, seemed at once to collect herself to execute some hardy resolution, raised her head, assumed an attitude and gait of determination and authority, and walking slowly betwixt her father and her mistress, took the salver from the hand of the former, and said in a low, but marked and decided tone, ‘Father, I will fill for my noble mistress, when such is her pleasure.’

'Thou, my child?' said Foster, eagerly and apprehensively, 'no, my child, it is not *thou* shalt render the lady this service'

'And why, I pray you,' said Janet, 'if it be fitting that the noble lady should partake of the cup at all?'

'Why — why?' said the seneschal, hesitating, and then bursting into passion as the readiest mode of supplying the lack of all other reason 'Why, because it is my pleasure, minion, that you should not! Get you gone to the evening lecture.'

'Now, as I hope to hear lecture again,' replied Janet, 'I will not go thither this night, unless I am better assured of my mistress's safety Give me that flask, father', and she took it from his reluctant hand, while he resigned it as if conscience struck. 'And now,' she said, 'father, that which shall benefit my mistress cannot do *me* prejudice. Father, I drink to you'

Foster, without speaking a word, rushed on his daughter and wrested the flask from her hand, then, as if embarrassed by what he had done, and totally unable to resolve what he should do next, he stood with it in his hand, one foot advanced and the other drawn back, glaring on his daughter with a countenance in which rage, fear, and convicted villany formed a hideous combination

'This is strange, my father,' said Janet, keeping her eye fixed on his, in the manner in which those who have the charge of lunatics are said to overawe their unhappy patients, 'will you neither let me serve my lady nor drink to her myself?'

The courage of the countess sustained her through this dreadful scene, of which the import was not the less obvious that it was not even hinted at. She preserved even the rash carelessness of her temper, and though her cheek had grown pale at the first alarm, her eye was calm and almost scornful. 'Will *you* taste this rare cordial, Master Foster? Perhaps you will not yourself refuse to pledge us, though you permit not Janet to do so Drink, sir, I pray you'

'I will not,' answered Foster

'And for whom, then, is the precious beverage reserved, sir?' said the countess

'For the devil, who brewed it!' answered Foster, and, turning on his heel, he left the chamber

Janet looked at her mistress with a countenance expressive in the highest degree of shame, dismay, and sorrow

'Do not weep for me, Janet,' said the countess, kindly

'No, madam,' replied her attendant, in a voice broken by sobs, 'it is not for you I weep, it is for myself — it is for that

unhappy man Those who are dishonoured before man, those who are condemned by God, have cause to mourn, not those who are innocent ! Farewell, madam !' she said, hastily assuming the mantle in which she was wont to go abroad

'Do you leave me, Janet?' said her mistress — 'desert me in such an evil strait?'

'Desert you, madam !' exclaimed Janet, and, running back to her mistress, she imprinted a thousand kisses on her hand — 'desert you ! may the Hope of my trust desert me when I do so ! No, madam, well you said the God you serve will open you a path for deliverance There is a way of escape, I have prayed night and day for light, that I might see how to act betwixt my duty to yonder unhappy man and that which I owe to you Sternly and fearfully that light has now dawned, and I must not shut the door which God opens Ask me no more I will return in brief space'

So speaking, she wrapped herself in her mantle, and saying to the old woman whom she passed in the outer room that she was going to evening prayer, she left the house

Meanwhile, her father had reached once more the laboratory, where he found the accomplices of his intended guilt

'Has the sweet bird sipped?' said Varney, with half a smile, while the astrologer put the same question with his eyes, but spoke not a word

'She has not, nor she shall not from my hands,' replied Foster, 'would you have me do murder in my daughter's presence?'

'Wert thou not told, thou sullen and yet faint-hearted slave,' answered Varney, with bitterness, 'that no *murder*, as thou call'st it, with that staring look and stammering tone, is designed in the matter ? Wert thou not told that a brief illness, such as woman puts on in very wantonness, that she may wear her night-gear at noon, and lie on a settle when she should mind her domestic business, is all here aimed at ? Here is a learned man will swear it to thee, by the key of the Castle of Wisdom'

'I swear it,' said Alasco, 'that the elixir thou hast there in the flask will not prejudice life ! I swear it by that immortal and indestructible quintessence of gold which pervades every substance in nature, though its secret existence can be traced by him only to whom Trismegistus renders the key of the Cabala.'

'An oath of force,' said Varney 'Foster, thou wert worse than a pagan to disbelieve it Believe me, moreover, who swear

by nothing but by my own word, that, if you be not conformable, there is no hope — no, not a glimpse of hope — that this thy leasehold may be transmuted into a copyhold. Thus, Alasco will leave your pewter artillery untransmigrated, and I, honest Anthony, will still have thee for my tenant.

‘I know not, gentlemen,’ said Foster, ‘where your designs tend to, but in one thing I am bound up, that, fall back fall edge, I will have one in this place that may pray for me, and that one shall be my daughter. I have lived ill, and the world has been too weighty with me, but she is as innocent as ever she was when on her mother’s lap, and she, at least, shall have her portion in that happy City whose walls are of pure gold, and the foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones.’

‘Ay, Tony,’ said Varney, ‘that were a paradise to thy heart’s content. Debate the matter with him, Doctor Alasco, I will be with you anon.’

So speaking, Varney arose, and, taking the flask from the table, he left the room.

‘I tell thee, my son,’ said Alasco to Foster as soon as Varney had left them, ‘that, whatever this bold and profligate railer may say of the mighty science in which, by Heaven’s blessing, I have advanced so far, that I would not call the wisest of living artists my better or my teacher. I say, howsoever yonder reprobate may scoff at things too holy to be apprehended by men merely of carnal and evil thoughts, yet believe, that the city beheld by St. John, in that bright vision of the Christian Apocalypse, that New Jerusalem of which all Christian men hope to partake, sets forth typically the discovery of the GRAND SECRET, whereby the most precious and perfect of nature’s works are elicited out of her basest and most crude productions, just as the light and gaudy butterfly, the most beautiful child of the summer’s breeze, breaks forth from the dungeon of a sordid chrysalis.’

‘Master Holdforth said nought of this exposition,’ said Foster, doubtfully, ‘and moreover, Doctor Alasco, the Holy Writ says that the gold and precious stones of the Holy City are in no sort for those who work abomination or who frame lies.’

‘Well, my son,’ said the doctor, ‘and what is your inference from thence?’

‘That those,’ said Foster, ‘who distil poisons, and administer them in secrecy, can have no portion in those unspeakable riches.’

'You are to distinguish, my son,' replied the alchemist, 'betwixt that which is necessarily evil in its progress and in its end also, and that which, being evil, is nevertheless capable of working forth good. If, by the death of one person, the happy period shall be brought nearer to us in which all that is good shall be attained by wishing its presence, all that is evil escaped by desiring its absence, in which sickness, and pain, and sorrow shall be the obedient servants of human wisdom, and made to fly at the slightest signal of a sage, in which that which is now richest and rarest shall be within the compass of every one who shall be obedient to the voice of wisdom, when the art of healing shall be lost and absorbed in the one universal medicine, when sages shall become monarchs of the earth, and death itself retreat before their frown—if this blessed consummation of all things can be hastened by the slight circumstance that a frail earthly body, which must needs partake corruption, shall be consigned to the grave a short space earlier than in the course of nature, what is such a sacrifice to the advancement of the holy millennium?'

'Millennium is the reign of the saints,' said Foster, somewhat doubtfully

'Say it is the reign of the sages, my son,' answered Alasco, 'or rather the reign of Wisdom itself'

'I touched on the question with Master Holdforth last exercising night,' said Foster, 'but he says your doctrine is heterodox, and a damnable and false exposition'

'He is in the bonds of ignorance, my son,' answered Alasco, 'and as yet burning bricks in Egypt, or, at best, wandering in the dry desert of Sinai. Thou didst ill to speak to such a man of such matters. I will, however, give thee proof, and that shortly, which I will defy that peevish divine to confute, though he should strive with me as the magicians strove with Moses before King Pharaoh. I will do projection in thy presence, my son—in thy very presence, and thine eyes shall witness the truth'

'Stick to that, learned sage,' said Varney, who at this moment entered the apartment, 'if he refuse the testimony of thy tongue, yet how shall he deny that of his own eyes?'

'Varney!' said the adept—'Varney already returned! Hast thou——' he stopped short

'Have I done mine errand, thou wouldst say?' replied Varney. 'I have. And thou,' he added, showing more symptoms of interest than he had hitherto exhibited—'art

thou sure thou hast poured forth neither more nor less than the just measure ?'

'Ay,' replied the alchemist, 'as sure as men can be in these nice proportions, for there is diversity of constitutions.'

'Nay, then,' said Varney, 'I fear nothing. I know thou wilt not go a step farther to the devil than thou art justly considered for. Thou wert paid to create illness, and wouldst esteem it thriftless prodigality to do murder at the same price. Come, let us each to our chamber. We shall see the event to morrow.'

'What didst thou do to make her swallow it ?' said Foster, shuddering.

'Nothing,' answered Varney, 'but looked on her with that aspect which governs madmen, women, and children. They told me, in St. Luke's Hospital, that I have the right look for overpowering a refractory patient. The keepers made me their compliments on't, so I know how to win my bread when my court favour fails me.'

'And art thou not afraid,' said Foster, 'lest the dose be disproportioned ?'

'If so,' replied Varney, 'she will but sleep the sounder, and the fear of that shall not break my rest. Good night, my masters.'

Anthony Foster groaned heavily, and lifted up his hands and eyes. The alchemist intimated his purpose to continue some experiment of high import during the greater part of the night, and the others separated to their places of repose.

CHAPTER XXIII

Now God be good to me in this wild pilgrimage !
All hope in human aid I cast behind me
Oh, who would be a woman ? — who that fool,
A weeping, pining, faithful, loving woman ?
She hath hard measure still where she hopes kindest,
And all her bounties only make ingrates

Love's Pilgrimage.

THE summer evening was closed, and Janet, just when her longer stay might have occasioned suspicion and inquiry in that jealous household, returned to Cumnor Place, and hastened to the apartment in which she had left her lady. She found her with her head resting on her arms, and these crossed upon a table which stood before her. As Janet came in, she neither looked up nor stirred.

Her faithful attendant ran to her mistress with the speed of lightning, and rousing her at the same time with her hand, conjured the countess, in the most earnest manner, to look up and say what thus affected her. The unhappy lady raised her head accordingly, and looking on her attendant with a ghastly eye, and cheek as pale as clay, 'Janet,' she said, 'I have drunk it.'

'God be praised !' said Janet, hastily. 'I mean, God be praised that it is no worse — the potion will not harm you. Rise, shake this lethargy from your limbs and this despair from your mind.'

'Janet,' repeated the countess again, 'disturb me not — leave me at peace — let life pass quietly — I am poisoned.'

'You are not, my dearest lady,' answered the maiden, eagerly, 'what you have swallowed cannot injure you, for the antidote has been taken before it, and I hastened hither to tell you that the means of escape are open to you.'

'Escape !' exclaimed the lady, as she raised herself hastily in her chair, while light returned to her eye and life to her cheek, 'but ah ! Janet, it comes too late.'

‘Not so, dearest lady Rise, take mine arm, walk through the apartment. Let not fancy do the work of poison! So, feel you not now that you are possessed of the full use of your limbs?’

‘The torpor seems to diminish,’ said the countess, as, supported by Janet, she walked to and fro in the apartment, ‘but is it then so, and have I not swallowed a deadly draught? Varney was here since thou wert gone, and commanded me, with eyes in which I read my fate, to swallow yon horrible drug O Janet! it must be fatal never was harmless drug served by such a cupbearer!’

‘He did not deem it harmless, I fear,’ replied the maiden, ‘but God confounds the devices of the wicked. Believe me, as I swear by the dear Gospel in which we trust, your life is safe from his practice. Did you not debate with him?’

‘The house was silent,’ answered the lady, ‘thou gone, no other but he in the chamber, and he capable of every crime I did but stipulate he would remove his hateful presence, and I drank whatever he offered. But you spoke of escape, Janet, can I be so happy?’

‘Are you strong enough to bear the tidings and make the effort?’ said the maiden

‘Strong!’ answered the countess — ‘ask the hind, when the fangs of the deer-hound are stretched to gripe her, if she is strong enough to spring over a chasm. I am equal to every effort that may relieve me from this place’

‘Hear me, then,’ said Janet. ‘One, whom I deem an assured friend of yours, has shown himself to me in various disguises, and sought speech of me, which — for my mind was not clear on the matter until this evening — I have ever declined. He was the pedlar who brought you goods, the itinerant hawker who sold me books, whenever I stirred abroad I was sure to see him The event of this night determined me to speak with him He waits even now at the postern gate of the park with means for your flight. But have you strength of body? Have you courage of mind? Can you undertake the enterprise?’

‘She that flies from death,’ said the lady, ‘finds strength of body, she that would escape from shame lacks no strength of mind. The thoughts of leaving behind me the villain who menaces both my life and honour would give me strength to rise from my death bed.’

‘In God’s name, then, lady,’ said Janet, ‘I must bid you adieu, and to God’s charge I must commit you!’

'Will you not fly with me, then, Janet?' said the countess, anxiously 'Am I to lose thee? Is this thy faithful service?'

'Lady, I would fly with you as willingly as bird ever fled from cage, but my doing so would occasion instant discovery and pursuit I must remain, and use means to disguise the truth for some time May Heaven pardon the falsehood because of the necessity!'

'And am I then to travel alone with this stranger?' said the lady 'Bethink thee, Janet, may not this prove some deeper and darker scheme to separate me perhaps from you, who are my only friend?'

'No, madam, do not suppose it,' answered Janet, readily, 'the youth is an honest youth in his purpose to you, and a friend to Master Tressilian, under whose direction he has come hither'

'If he be a friend of Tressilian,' said the countess, 'I will commit myself to his charge as to that of an angel sent from Heaven for than Tressilian never breathed mortal man more free of whatever was base, false, or selfish He forgot himself whenever he could be of use to others Alas! and how was he requited!'

With eager haste they collected the few necessaries which it was thought proper the countess should take with her, and which Janet, with speed and dexterity, formed into a small bundle, not forgetting to add such ornaments of intrinsic value as came most readily in her way, and particularly a casket of jewels, which she wisely judged might prove of service in some future emergency The Countess of Leicester next changed her dress for one which Janet usually wore upon any brief journey, for they judged it necessary to avoid every external distinction which might attract attention. Ere these preparations were fully made, the moon had arisen in the summer heaven, and all in the mansion had betaken themselves to rest, or at least to the silence and retirement of their chambers

There was no difficulty anticipated in escaping, whether from the house or garden, provided only they could elude observation. Anthony Foster had accustomed himself to consider his daughter as a conscious sinner might regard a visible guardian angel, which, notwithstanding his guilt, continued to hover around him, and therefore his trust in her knew no bounds Janet commanded her own motions during the daytime, and had a master-key which opened the postern door of the park, so that she could go to the village at pleasure, either upon the house-

hold affairs, which were entirely confided to her management, or to attend her devotions at the meeting house of her sect. It is true, the daughter of Foster was thus liberally entrusted under the solemn condition that she should not avail herself of these privileges to do anything inconsistent with the safe keeping of the countess, for so her residence at Cumnor Place had been termed, since she began of late to exhibit impatience of the restrictions to which she was subjected. Nor is there reason to suppose that anything short of the dreadful suspicions which the scene of that evening had excited could have induced Janet to violate her word or deceive her father's confidence. But from what she had witnessed, she now conceived herself not only justified, but imperatively called upon, to make her lady's safety the principal object of her care, setting all other considerations aside.

The fugitive countess, with her guide, traversed with hasty steps the broken and interrupted path, which had once been an avenue, now totally darkened by the boughs of spreading trees which met above their head, and now receiving a doubtful and deceiving light from the beams of the moon, which penetrated where the axe had made openings in the wood. Their path was repeatedly interrupted by felled trees, or the large boughs which had been left on the ground till time served to make them into fagots and billets. The inconvenience and difficulty attending these interruptions, the breathless haste of the first part of their route, the exhausting sensations of hope and fear, so much affected the countess's strength that Janet was forced to propose that they should pause for a few minutes to recover breath and spirits. Both, therefore, stood still beneath the shadow of a huge old gnarled oak-tree, and both naturally looked back to the mansion which they had left behind them, whose long dark front was seen in the gloomy distance, with its huge stacks of chimneys, turrets, and clock-house, rising above the line of the roof, and definedly visible against the pure azure blue of the summer sky. One light only twinkled from the extended and shadowy mass, and it was placed so low that it rather seemed to glimmer from the ground in front of the mansion than from one of the windows. The countess's terror was awakened. 'They follow us!' she said, pointing out to Janet the light which thus alarmed her.

Less agitated than her mistress, Janet perceived that the gleam was stationary, and informed the countess, in a whisper, that the light proceeded from the solitary cell in which the

alchemist pursued his occult experiments 'He is of those,' she added, 'who sit up and watch by night that they may commit iniquity. Evil was the chance which sent hither a man whose mixed speech of earthly wealth and unearthly or superhuman knowledge hath in it what doth so especially captivate my poor father. Well spoke the good Master Holdforth, and, methought, not without meaning that those of our household should find therein a practical use. "There be those," he said, "and their number is legion, who will rather, like the wicked Ahab, listen to the dreams of the false prophet Zedekiah than to the words of him by whom the Lord has spoken." And he further insisted — "Ah, my brethren, there be many Zedekiahs among you — men that promise you the light of their carnal knowledge, so you will surrender to them that of your Heavenly understanding. What are they better than the tyrant Naas, who demanded the right eye of those who were subjected to him?" And farther, he insisted —'

It is uncertain how long the fan Puritan's memory might have supported her in the recapitulation of Master Holdforth's discourse, but the countess now interrupted her, and assured her she was so much recovered that she could now reach the postern without the necessity of a second delay.

They set out accordingly, and performed the second part of their journey with more deliberation, and of course more easily, than the first hasty commencement. This gave them leisure for reflection, and Janet now, for the first time, ventured to ask her lady which way she proposed to direct her flight. Receiving no immediate answer — for, perhaps, in the confusion of her mind, this very obvious subject of deliberation had not occurred to the countess — Janet ventured to add, 'Probably to your father's house, where you are sure of safety and protection?'

'No, Janet,' said the lady, mournfully, 'I left Lidcote Hall while my heart was light and my name was honourable, and I will not return thither till my lord's permission and public acknowledgment of our marriage restore me to my native home with all the rank and honour which he has bestowed on me.'

'And whither will you, then, madam?' said Janet.

'To Kenilworth, girl,' said the countess, boldly and freely 'I will see these revels — these princely revels — the preparation for which makes the land ring from side to side. Methinks, when the Queen of England feasts within my husband's halls, the Countess of Leicester should be no unbecoming guest.'

'I pray God you may be a welcome one!' said Janet, hastily
'You abuse my situation, Janet,' said the countess, angrily,
'and you forget your own'

'I do neither, dearest madam,' said the sorrowful maiden,
'but have you forgotten that the noble earl has given such
strict charges to keep your marriage secret that he may pre-
serve his court favour? and can you think that your sudden
appearance at his castle at such a juncture, and in such a
presence, will be acceptable to him?'

'Thou thinkest I would disgrace him?' said the countess,
'nay, let go my arm, I can walk without aid, and work without
counsel.'

'Be not angry with me, lady,' said Janet, meekly, 'and let
me still support you, the road is rough, and you are little
accustomed to walk in darkness.'

'If you deem me not so mean as may disgrace my husband,'
said the countess, in the same resentful tone, 'you suppose my
Lord of Leicester capable of abetting, perhaps of giving aim
and authority to, the base proceedings of your father and
Varney, whose errand I will do to the good earl.'

'For God's sake, madam, spare my father in your report,'
said Janet, 'let my services, however poor, be some atonement
for his errors!'

'I were most unjust, dearest Janet, were it otherwise,' said
the countess, resuming at once the fondness and confidence of
her manner towards her faithful attendant. 'No, Janet, not a
word of mine shall do your father prejudice. But thou seest;
my love, I have no desire but to throw myself on my husband's
protection. I have left the abode he assigned for me, because
of the villany of the persons by whom I was surrounded, but
I will disobey his commands in no other particular. I will
appeal to him alone, I will be protected by him alone. To no
other than at his pleasure have I or will I communicate the
secret union which combines our hearts and our destinies. I
will see him, and receive from his own lips the directions for
my future conduct. Do not argue against my resolution,
Janet, you will only confirm me in it. And to own the truth,
I am resolved to know my fate at once, and from my husband's
own mouth, and to seek him at Kenilworth is the surest way to
attain my purpose'

While Janet hastily revolved in her mind the difficulties and
uncertainties attendant on the unfortunate lady's situation,
she was inclined to alter her first opinion, and to think, upon

the whole, that, since the countess had withdrawn herself from the retreat in which she had been placed by her husband, it was her first duty to repair to his presence, and possess him with the reasons of such conduct. She knew what importance the earl attached to the concealment of their marriage, and could not but own that, by taking any step to make it public without his permission, the countess would incur, in a high degree, the indignation of her husband. If she retired to her father's house without an explicit avowal of her rank, her situation was likely greatly to prejudice her character, and if she made such an avowal, it might occasion an irreconcilable breach with her husband. At Kenilworth, again, she might plead her cause with her husband himself, whom Janet, though distrusting him more than the countess did, believed incapable of being accessory to the base and desperate means which his dependants, from whose power the lady was now escaping, might resort to, in order to stifle her complaints of the treatment she had received at their hands. But at the worst, and were the earl himself to deny her justice and protection, still at Kenilworth, if she chose to make her wrongs public, the countess might have Tressilian for her advocate, and the Queen for her judge, for so much Janet had learned in her short conference with Wayland. She was, therefore, on the whole, reconciled to her lady's proposal of going towards Kenilworth, and so expressed herself, recommending, however to the countess the utmost caution in making her arrival known to her husband.

'Hast thou thyself been cautious, Janet?' said the countess 'this guide, in whom I must put my confidence, hast thou not entrusted to him the secret of my condition?'

'From me he has learned nothing,' said Janet, 'nor do I think that he knows more than what the public in general believe of your situation.'

'And what is that?' said the lady

'That you left your father's house—but I shall offend you again if I go on,' said Janet, interrupting herself.

'Nay, go on,' said the countess, 'I must learn to endure the evil report which my folly has brought upon me. They think, I suppose, that I have left my father's house to follow lawless pleasure. It is an error which will soon be removed—indeed it shall, for I will live with spotless fame or I shall cease to live. I am accounted, then, the paramour of my Leicester?'

'Most men say of Varney,' said Janet, 'yet some call him only the convenient cloak of his master's pleasures, for reports of the profuse expense in garnishing yonder apartments have secretly gone abroad, and such doings far surpass the means of Varney. But this latter opinion is little prevalent, for men dare hardly even hint suspicion when so high a name is concerned, lest the Star Chamber should punish them for scandal of the nobility.'

'They do well to speak low,' said the countess, 'who would mention the illustrious Dudley as the accomplice of such a wretch as Varney. We have reached the postern. Ah! Janet, I must bid thee farewell! Weep not, my good girl,' said she, endeavouring to cover her own reluctance to part with her faithful attendant under an attempt at playfulness, 'and against we meet again, reform me, Janet, that precise ruff of thine for an open rabatine of lace and cut-work, that will let men see thou hast a fair neck, and that kirtle of Philippine Cheney, with that bugle lace which befits only a chambermaid, into three piled velvet and cloth of gold. thou wilt find plenty of stuffs in my chamber, and I freely bestow them on you. Thou must be brave, Janet, for though thou art now but the attendant of a distressed and errant lady, who is both nameless and fameless, yet, when we meet again, thou must be dressed as becomes the gentlewoman nearest in love and in service to the first countess in England!'

'Now, may God grant it, dear lady!' said Janet — 'not that I may go with gayer apparel, but that we may both wear our kirtles over lighter hearts.'

By this time the lock of the postern door had, after some hard wrenching, yielded to the master key, and the countess, not without internal shuddering, saw herself beyond the walls which her husband's strict commands had assigned to her as the boundary of her walks. Waiting with much anxiety for their appearance, Wayland Smith stood at some distance, shrouding himself behind a hedge which bordered the highroad.

'Is all safe?' said Janet to him, anxiously, as he approached them with caution.

'All,' he replied, 'but I have been unable to procure a horse for the lady. Giles Gosling, the cowardly hilding, refused me one on any terms whatever, lest, forsooth, he should suffer — but no matter. She must ride on my palfrey, and I must walk by her side until I come by another horse. There will be no pursuit, if you, pretty Mistress Janet, forget not thy lesson.'

'No more than the wise widow of Tekoa forgot the words which Joab put into her mouth,' answered Janet 'To-morrow, I say that my lady is unable to rise'

'Ay, and that she hath aching and heaviness of the head, a throbbing at the heart, and lists not to be disturbed Fear not, they will take the hint, and trouble thee with few questions they understand the disease'

'But,' said the lady, 'my absence must be soon discovered, and they will murder her in revenge I will rather return than expose her to such danger'

'Be at ease on my account, madam,' said Janet, 'I would you were as sure of receiving the favour you desire from those to whom you must make appeal, as I am that my father, however angry, will suffer no harm to befall me'

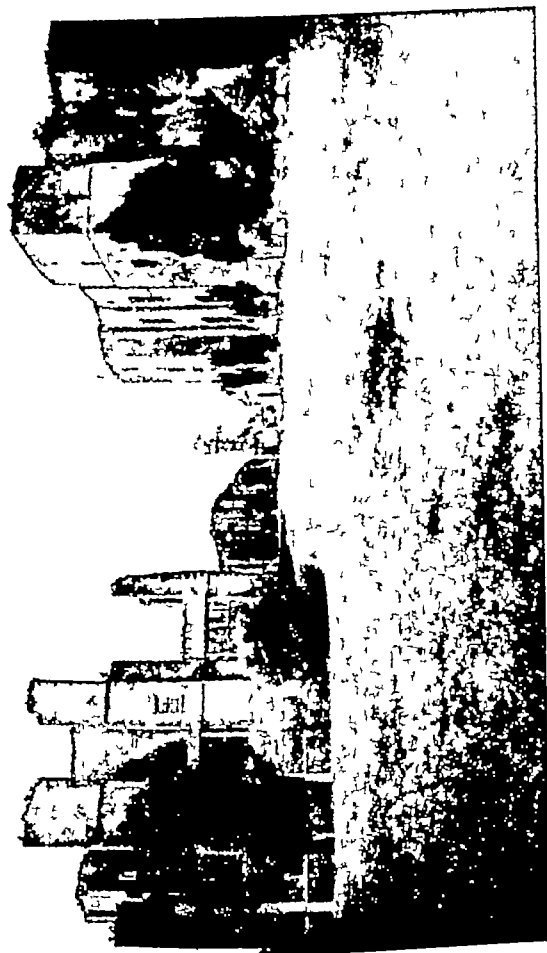
The countess was now placed by Wayland upon his horse, around the saddle of which he had placed his cloak, so folded as to make her a commodious seat

'Adieu, and may the blessing of God wend with you!' said Janet, again kissing her mistress's hand who returned her benediction with a mute caress They then tore themselves asunder, and Janet, addressing Wayland, exclaimed, 'May Heaven deal with you at your need, as you are true or false to this most injured and most helpless lady!'

'Amen! dearest Janet,' replied Wayland, 'and believe me, I will so acquit myself of my trust, as may tempt even your pretty eyes, saint-like as they are, to look less scornfully on me when we next meet'

The latter part of this adieu was whispered into Janet's ear, and, although she made no reply to it directly, yet her manner, influenced no doubt by her desire to leave every motive in force which could operate towards her mistress's safety, did not discourage the hope which Wayland's words expressed She re-entered the postern door, and locked it behind her, while, Wayland taking the horse's bridle in his hand and walking close by its head, they began in silence their dubious and moonlight journey

Although Wayland Smith used the utmost despatch which he could make, yet this mode of travelling was so slow that, when morning began to dawn through the eastern mist, he found himself no farther than about ten miles distant from Cumnor 'Now, a plague upon all smooth-spoken hosts!' said Wayland, unable longer to suppress his mortification and uneasiness 'Had the false loon, Giles Goshing, but told me plainly



KENILWORTH CASTLE
From a recent photograph

two days since that I was to reckon nought upon him, I had shifted better for myself. But your hosts have such a custom of promising whatever is called for, that it is not till the steed is to be shod you find they are out of iron. Had I but known, I could have made twenty shifts, nay, for that matter, and in so good a cause, I would have thought little to have prigged a prancer from the next common — it had but been sending back the brute to the head-borough. 'The farcy and the founders confound every horse in the stables of the Black Bear!'

The lady endeavoured to comfort her guide, observing, that the dawn would enable him to make more speed.

'True, madam,' he replied, 'but then it will enable other folk to take note of us, and that may prove an ill beginning of our journey. I had not cared a spark from anvil about the matter had we been farther advanced on our way. But this Berkshire has been notoriously haunted ever since I knew the country with that sort of malicious elves who sit up late and rise early for no other purpose than to pry into other folks' affairs. I have been endangered by them ere now. But do not fear,' he added, 'good madam, for wit, meeting with opportunity, will not miss to find a salve for every sore.'

The alarms of her guide made more impression on the countess's mind than the comfort which he judged fit to administer along with it. She looked anxiously around her, and as the shadows withdrew from the landscape, and the heightening glow of the eastern sky promised the speedy rise of the sun, expected at every turn that the increasing light would expose them to the view of the vengeful pursuers, or present some dangerous and insurmountable obstacle to the prosecution of their journey. Wayland Smith perceived her uneasiness, and, displeased with himself for having given her cause of alarm, strode on with affected alacrity, now talking to the horse as one expert in the language of the stable, now whistling to himself low and interrupted snatches of tunes, and now assuring the lady there was no danger, while at the same time he looked sharply around to see that there was nothing in sight which might give the lie to his words while they were issuing from his mouth. Thus did they journey on, until an unexpected incident gave them the means of continuing their pilgrimage with more speed and convenience.

CHAPTER XXIV

Richard A horse ! — a horse ! — my kingdom for a horse !
Catesby ——— My lord, I 'll help you to a horse

Richard III

OUR travellers were in the act of passing a small thicket of trees close by the roadside, when the first living being presented himself whom they had seen since their departure from Cumnor Place. This was a stupid lout, seemingly a farmer's boy, in a grey jerkin, with his head bare, his hose about his heels, and huge startups upon his feet. He held by the bridle what of all things they most wanted — a palfrey, namely, with a side-saddle and all other garniture for a woman's mounting, and he hailed Wayland Smith with, 'Zur, be ye zure the party?'

'Ay, that I be, my lad,' answered Wayland, without an instant's hesitation, and it must be owned that consciences trained in a stricter school of morality might have given way to an occasion so tempting. While he spoke, he caught the rein out of the boy's hand, and almost at the same time helped down the countess from his own horse, and aided her to mount on that which chance had thus presented for her acceptance. Indeed, so naturally did the whole take place, that the countess, as it afterwards appeared, never suspected but that the horse had been placed there to meet them by the precaution of the guide or some of his friends.

The lad, however, who was thus hastily dispossessed of his charge, began to stare hard, and scratch his head, as if seized with some qualms of conscience for delivering up the animal on such brief explanation. 'I be right zure thou be'st the party,' said he, muttering to himself, 'but thou shouldst ha zaid "Beans," thou knaw'st.'

'Ay — ay,' said Wayland, speaking at a venture, 'and thou "Bacon," thou know'st.'

'Noa — noa,' said the lad, 'bide ye — bide ye, it was "Peas" a should ha said.'

'Well — well,' answered Wayland, "'Peas" be it, a God's name! though "Bacon" were the better password'

And being by this time mounted on his own horse, he caught the rein of the palfrey from the uncertain hold of the hesitating young boor, flung him a small piece of money, and made amends for lost time by riding briskly off without farther parley. The lad was still visible from the hill up which they were riding, and Wayland, as he looked back, beheld him standing with his fingers in his hair as immovable as a guide post, and his head turned in the direction in which they were escaping from him. At length, just as they topped the hill, he saw the clown stoop to lift up the silver groat which his benevolence had imparted. 'Now this is what I call a God-send,' said Wayland 'this is a bounny well-riden bit of a going thing, and it will carry us so far till we get you as well mounted, and then we will send it back time enough to satisfy the hue and cry'

But he was deceived in his expectations, and fate, which seemed at first to promise so fairly, soon threatened to turn the incident which he thus gloried in into the cause of their utter ruin

They had not ridden a short mile from the place where they left the lad before they heard a man's voice shouting on the wind behind them, 'Robbery! — robbery! Stop thief!' and similar exclamations, which Wayland's conscience readily assured him must arise out of the transaction to which he had been just accessory

'I had better have gone barefoot all my life,' he said 'it is the hue and cry, and I am a lost man. Ah! Wayland — Wayland, many a time thy father said horse flesh would be the death of thee. Were I once safe among the horse coursers in Smithfield or Turnball Street, they should have leave to hang me as high as St. Paul's if I e'er meddled more with nobles, knights, or gentlewomen!'

Amidst these dismal reflections, he turned his head repeatedly to see by whom he was chased, and was much comforted when he could only discover a single rider, who was, however, well mounted, and came after them at a speed which left them no chance of escaping, even had the lady's strength permitted her to ride as fast as her palfrey might have been able to gallop

'There may be fair play betwixt us, sure,' thought Wayland, 'where there is but one man on each side, and yonder fellow sits on his horse more like a monkey than a cavalier. Pshaw!

if it come to the worst, it will be easy unhorsing him. Nay, 'snails' I think his horse will take the matter in his own hand, for he has the bridle betwixt his teeth. Oons, what care I for him?' said he, as the pursuer drew yet nearer, 'it is but the little animal of a mercer from Abingdon, when all is over.'

Even so it was, as the experienced eye of Wayland had descried at a distance. For the valiant mercer's horse, which was a beast of mettle, feeling himself put to his speed, and discerning a couple of horses riding fast, at some hundred yards' distance before him, betook himself to the road with such alacrity as totally deranged the seat of his rider, who not only came up with, but passed at full gallop, those whom he had been pursuing, pulling the reins with all his might, and ejaculating, 'Stop! — stop!' an interjection which seemed rather to regard his own palfrey than what seamen call 'the chase.' With the same involuntary speed, he shot ahead, to use another nautical phrase, about a furlong ere he was able to stop and turn his horse, and then rode back towards our travellers, adjusting, as well as he could, his disordered dress, resettling himself in the saddle, and endeavouring to substitute a bold and martial frown for the confusion and dismay which sat upon his visage during his involuntary career.

Wayland had just time to caution the lady not to be alarmed, adding, 'This fellow is a gull, and I will use him as such.'

When the mercer had recovered breath and audacity enough to confront them, he ordered Wayland, in a menacing tone, to deliver up his palfrey.

'How?' said the smith, in King Cambyses' vein, 'are we commanded to stand and deliver on the king's highway? Then out, Excalibar, and tell this knight of prowess that dire blows must decide between us!'

'Haro and help, and hue and cry, every true man!' said the mercer, 'I am withstood in seeking to recover mine own!'

'Thou swearest thy gods in vain, foul paynim,' said Wayland, 'for I will through with my purpose, were death at the end on't. Nevertheless, know, thou false man of frail cambric and ferrateen, that I am he, even the pedlar, whom thou didst boast to meet on Maiden Castle Moor and despoil of his pack, wherefore betake thee to thy weapons presently.'

'I spoke but in jest, man,' said Goldthred, 'I am an honest shopkeeper and citizen, who scorns to leap forth on any man from behind a hedge.'

'Then, by my faith, most puissant mercer,' answered Wayland, 'I am sorry for my vow, which was that, wherever I met thee, I would despoil thee of thy palfrey and bestow it upon my leman, unless thou couldst defend it by blows of force. But the vow is passed and registered, and all that I can do for thee is to leave the horse at Donnington, in the nearest hostelry.'

'But I tell thee, friend,' said the mercer, 'it is the very horse on which I was this day to carry Jane Thackham of Shottesbrook as far as the parish church yonder, to become Dame Goldthred. She hath jumped out of the shot-window of old Gaffer Thackham's grange, and lo ye, yonder she stands at the place where she should have met the palfrey, with her camlet riding cloak and ivory-handled whip, like a picture of Lot's wife. I pray you, in good terms, let me have back the palfrey.'

'Grieved am I,' said Wayland, 'as much for the fair damsel as for thee, most noble imp of muslin. But vows must have their course, thou wilt find the palfrey at the Angel yonder at Donnington. It is all I may do for thee with a safe conscience.'

'To the devil with thy conscience!' said the dismayed mercer. 'Wouldst thou have a bride walk to church on foot?'

'Thou mayest take her on thy crupper, Sir Goldthred,' answered Wayland, 'it will take down thy steed's mettle.'

'And how if you — if you forget to leave my horse, as you propose?' said Goldthred, not without hesitation, for his soul was afraid within him.

'My pack shall be pledged for it, yonder it lies with Giles Gosling, in his chamber with the damask'd leathern hangings, stuffed full with velvet — single, double, triple piled — rash, taffeta and paropa, shag, damask, and mockado, plush and grogram —'

'Hold! — hold!' exclaimed the mercer, 'nay, if there be, in truth and sincerity, but the half of these wares — but if ever I trust bumpkin with bonny Bayard again!'

'As you list for that, good Master Goldthred, and so good morrow to you — and well parted,' he added, riding on cheerfully with the lady, while the discountenanced mercer rode back much slower than he came, pondering what excuse he should make to the disappointed bride, who stood waiting for her gallant groom in the midst of the king's highway.

‘Methought,’ said the lady as they rode on, ‘yonder fool stared at me as if he had some remembrance of me, yet I kept my muffler as high as I might’

‘If I thought so,’ said Wayland, ‘I would ride back and cut him over the pate there would be no fear of harming his brains, for he never had so much as would make pap to a sucking gosling We must now push on, however, and at Donnington we will leave the oaf’s horse, that he may have no farther temptation to pursue us, and endeavour to assume such a change of shape as may baffle his pursuit, if he should persevere in it’

The travellers reached Donnington without farther alarm, where it became matter of necessity that the countess should enjoy two or three hours’ repose, during which Wayland disposed himself, with equal address and alacrity, to carry through those measures on which the safety of their future journey seemed to depend.

Exchanging his pedlar’s gaberdine for a smock-frock, he carried the palfrey of Goldthred to the Angel Inn, which was at the other end of the village from that where our travellers had taken up their quarters In the progress of the morning, as he travelled about his other business, he saw the steed brought forth and delivered to the cutting mercer himself, who, at the head of a valorous posse of the hue and cry, came to rescue, by force of arms, what was delivered to him without any other ransom than the price of a huge quantity of ale, drunk out by his assistants, thirsty, it would seem, with their walk, and concerning the price of which Master Goldthred had a fierce dispute with the head-borough, whom he had summoned to aid him in raising the country

Having made this act of prudent, as well as just, restitution, Wayland procured such change of apparel for the lady, as well as himself, as gave them both the appearance of country people of the better class, it being farther resolved that, in order to attract the less observation, she should pass upon the road for the sister of her guide A good, but not a gay horse, fit to keep pace with his own, and gentle enough for a lady’s use, completed the preparations for the journey, for making which, and for other expenses, he had been furnished with sufficient funds by Tressilian And thus, about noon, after the countess had been refreshed by the sound repose of several hours, they resumed their journey, with the purpose of making the best of their way to Kenilworth, by Coventry and Warwick. They

were not, however, destined to travel far without meeting some cause of apprehension

It is necessary to premise, that the landlord of the inn had informed them that a jovial party, intended, as he understood, to present some of the masques or mummeries which made a part of the entertainment with which the Queen was usually welcomed on the royal progresses, had left the village of Donnington an hour or two before them, in order to proceed to Kenilworth. Now it had occurred to Wayland that, by attaching themselves in some sort to this group, as soon as they should overtake them on the road, they would be less likely to attract notice than if they continued to travel entirely by themselves. He communicated his idea to the countess, who, only anxious to arrive at Kenilworth without interruption, left him free to choose the manner in which this was to be accomplished. They pressed forward their horses, therefore, with the purpose of overtaking the party of intended revellers, and making the journey in their company, and had just seen the little party, consisting partly of riders, partly of people on foot, crossing the summit of a gentle hill, at about half a mile's distance, and disappearing on the other side, when Wayland, who maintained the most circumspect observation of all that met his eye in every direction, was aware that a rider was coming up behind them on a horse of uncommon action, accompanied by a serving-man, whose utmost efforts were unable to keep up with his master's trotting hackney, and who, therefore, was fain to follow him at a hand-gallop. Wayland looked anxiously back at these horsemen, became considerably disturbed in his manner, looked back again, and became pale, as he said to the lady — 'That is Richard Varney's trotting gelding. I would know him among a thousand nags, this is a worse business than meeting the mercer.'

'Draw your sword,' answered the lady, 'and pierce my bosom with it, rather than I should fall into his hands!'

'I would rather by a thousand times,' answered Wayland, 'pass it through his body, or even mine own. But to say truth, fighting is not my best point, though I can look on cold iron like another when needs must be. And, indeed, as for my sword — put on, I pray you — it is a poor provant rapier, and I warrant you he has a special Toledo. He has a serving-man, too, and I think it is the drunken ruffian Lambourne, upon the horse on which men say — I pray you heartily to put on — he did the great robbery of the west country grazier. It

is not that I fear either Varney or Lambourne in a good cause — your palfrey will go yet faster if you urge him — but yet — nay, I pray you let him not break off into the gallop, lest they should see we fear them, and give chase, keep him only at the full trot — but yet, though I fear them not, I would we were well rid of them, and that rather by policy than by violence. Could we once reach the party before us, we may herd among them, and pass unobserved, unless Varney be really come in express pursuit of us, and then, happy man be his dole !'

While he thus spoke, he alternately urged and restrained his horse, desirous to maintain the fleetest pace that was consistent with the idea of an ordinary journey on the road, but to avoid such rapidity of movement as might give rise to suspicion that they were flying.

At such a pace, they ascended the gentle hill we have mentioned, and, looking from the top, had the pleasure to see that the party which had left Donnington before them were in the little valley or bottom on the other side, where the road was traversed by a rivulet, beside which was a cottage or two. In this place they seemed to have made a pause, which gave Wayland the hope of joining them, and becoming a part of their company, ere Varney should overtake them. He was the more anxious, as his companion, though she made no complaints and expressed no fear, began to look so deadly pale that he was afraid she might drop from her horse. Notwithstanding this symptom of decaying strength, she pushed on her palfrey so briskly that they joined the party in the bottom of the valley ere Varney appeared on the top of the gentle eminence which they had descended.

They found the company to which they meant to associate themselves in great disorder. The women, with dishevelled locks and looks of great importance, ran in and out of one of the cottages, and the men stood around holding the horses, and looking silly enough, as is usual in cases where their assistance is not wanted.

Wayland and his charge paused, as if out of curiosity, and then gradually, without making any inquiries, or being asked any questions, they mingled with the group, as if they had always made part of it.

They had not stood there above five minutes, anxiously keeping as much to the side of the road as possible, so as to place the other travellers betwixt them and Varney, when Lord Leicester's master of the horse, followed by Lambourne,

came riding fiercely down the hill, their horses' flanks and the rowels of their spurs showing bloody tokens of the rate at which they travelled. The appearance of the stationary group around the cottages, wearing their buckram suits in order to protect their masquing dresses, having their light cart for transporting their scenery, and carrying various fantastic properties in their hands for the more easy conveyance, let the riders at once into the character and purpose of the company.

'You are revellers,' said Varney, 'designing for Kenilworth?'

'*Recte quidem, Domine spectatissime,*' answered one of the party

'And why the devil stand you here,' said Varney, 'when your utmost despatch will but bring you to Kenilworth in time? The Queen dines at Warwick to-morrow, and you loiter here, ye knaves!'

'In very truth, sir,' said a little diminutive urchin, wearing a vizard with a couple of sprouting horns of an elegant scarlet hue, having moreover a black serge jerkin drawn close to his body by lacing, garnished with red stockings, and shoes so shaped as to resemble cloven feet — 'in very truth, sir, and you are in the right on't. It is my father the devil, who, being taken in labour, has delayed our present purpose, by increasing our company with an imp too many.'

'The devil he has!' answered Varney, whose laugh, however, never exceeded a sarcastic smile.

'It is even as the juvenal hath said,' added the masquer who spoke first — 'our major devil — for this is but our minor one — is even now at *Lucina fer opem*, within that very *tugurium*'

'By St. George, or rather by the Dragon, who may be a kinsman of the fiend in the straw, a most comical chance!' said Varney. 'How sayest thou, Lambourne, wilt thou stand godfather for the nonce? If the devil were to choose a gossip, I know no one more fit for the office.'

'Saving always when my betters are in presence,' said Lambourne, with the civil impudence of a servant who knows his services to be so indispensable that his jest will be permitted to pass muster.

'And what is the name of this devil or devil's dam who has timed her turns so strangely?' said Varney. 'We can ill afford to spare any of our actors.'

'*Gaudet nomine Sibyllæ,*' said the first speaker — 'she is called Sibyl Laneham, wife of Master Richard Laneham —'

'Clerk to the council-chamber door,' said Varney, 'why,

she is inexcusable, having had experience how to have ordered her matters better. But who were those, a man and a woman, I think, who rode so hastily up the hill before me even now? Do they belong to your company?’

Wayland was about to hazard a reply to this alarming inquiry, when the little diabolin again thrust in his oar.

‘So please you,’ he said, coming up close to Varney, and speaking so as not to be overheard by his companions, ‘the man was our devil major, who has tricks enough to supply the lack of a hundred such as Dame Laneham, and the woman, if you please, is the sage person whose assistance is most particularly necessary to our distressed comrade.’

‘Oh, what, you have got the wise woman, then?’ said Varney. ‘Why, truly, she rode like one bound to a place where she was needed. And you have a spare limb of Satan, besides, to supply the place of Mistress Laneham?’

‘Ay, sir,’ said the boy, ‘they are not so scarce in this world as your honour’s virtuous eminence would suppose. This master-fiend shall spit a few flashes of fire and eruct a volume or two of smoke on the spot, if it will do you pleasure. You would think he had *Ætna* in his abdomen.’

‘I lack time just now, most hopeful imp of darkness, to witness his performance,’ said Varney, ‘but here is something for you all to drink the lucky hour, and so, as the play says, “God be with your labour!”’

Thus speaking, he struck his horse with the spurs, and rode on his way.

Lambourne tarried a moment or two behind his master, and rummaged his pouch for a piece of silver, which he bestowed on the communicative imp, as he said, for his encouragement on his path to the infernal regions, some sparks of whose fire, he said, he could discover flashing from him already. Then, having received the boy’s thanks for his generosity, he also spurred his horse, and rode after his master as fast as the fire flashes from flint.

‘And now,’ said the wily imp, sidling close up to Wayland’s horse, and cutting a gambol in the air, which seemed to vindicate his title to relationship with the prince of that element, ‘I have told them who *you* are, do you in return tell me who *I* am?’

‘Either Flibbertigibbet,’ answered Wayland Smith, ‘or else an imp of the devil in good earnest.’

‘Thou hast hit it,’ answered Dickie Sludge, ‘I am thine

own Flibbertigibbet, man, and I have broken forth of bounds, along with my learned preceptor, as I told thee I would do, whether he would or not. But what lady hast thou got with thee? I saw thou wert at fault the first question was asked, and so I drew up for thy assistance. But I must know all who she is, dear Wayland.'

'Thou shalt know fifty finer things, my dear ingie,' said Wayland, 'but a truce to thine inquiries just now, and since you are bound for Kenilworth, thither will I too, even for the love of thy sweet face and waggish company.'

'Thou shouldst have said my waggish face and sweet company,' said Dickie, 'but how wilt thou travel with us—I mean in what character?'

'E'en in that thou hast assigned me, to be sure—as a juggler, thou know'st I am used to the craft,' answered Wayland.

'Ay, but the lady?' answered Flibbertigibbet, 'credit me, I think she is one, and thou art in a sea of troubles about her at this moment, as I can perceive by thy fidgeting.'

'Oh, she, man!—she is a poor sister of mine,' said Wayland. 'She can sing and play o' the lute, would win the fish out o' the stream.'

'Let me hear her instantly,' said the boy. 'I love the lute rarely—I love it of all things, though I never heard it.'

'Then how canst thou love it, Flibbertigibbet?' said Wayland.

'As knights love ladies in old tales,' answered Dickie, 'on hearsay.'

'Then love it on hearsay a little longer, till my sister is recovered from the fatigue of her journey,' said Wayland, muttering afterwards betwixt his teeth, 'the devil take the imp's curiosity! I must keep fair weather with him, or we shall fare the worse.'

He then proceeded to state to Master Holaday his own talents as a juggler, with those of his sister as a musician. Some proof of his dexterity was demanded, which he gave in such a style of excellence that, delighted at obtaining such an accession to their party, they readily acquiesced in the apology which he offered when a display of his sister's talents was required. The new-comers were invited to partake of the refreshments with which the party were provided, and it was with some difficulty that Wayland Smith obtained an opportunity of being apart with his supposed sister during the meal, of which interval he availed himself to entreat her to forget

for the present both her rank and her sorrows, and condescend, as the most probable chance of remaining concealed, to mix in the society of those with whom she was to travel

The countess allowed the necessity of the case, and when they resumed their journey, endeavoured to comply with her guide's advice by addressing herself to a female near her, and expressing her concern for the woman whom they were thus obliged to leave behind them

'Oh, she is well attended, madam,' replied the dame whom she addressed, who, from her jolly and laughter-loving demeanour, might have been the very emblem of the Wife of Bath, 'and my gossip Laneham thinks as little of these matters as any one. By the ninth day, on the revels last so long, we shall have her with us at Kenilworth, even if she should travel with her bantering on her back'

There was something in this speech which took away all desire on the Countess of Leicester's part to continue the conversation, but having broken the charm by speaking to her fellow-traveller first, the good dame, who was to play Rare Gillian of Croyden in one of the interludes, took care that silence did not again settle on the journey, but entertained her mute companion with a thousand anecdotes of revels, from the days of King Harry downwards, with the reception given them by the great folk, and all the names of those who played the principal characters, but ever concluding with 'They would be nothing to the princely pleasures of Kenilworth'

'And when shall we reach Kenilworth?' said the countess, with an agitation which she in vain attempted to conceal.

'We that have horses may, with late riding, get to Warwick to-night, and Kenilworth may be distant some four or five miles, but then we must wait till the foot-people come up, although it is like my good Lord of Leicester will have horses or light carriages to meet them, and bring them up without being travel-toiled, which last is no good preparation, as you may suppose, for dancing before your betters. And yet, Lord help me, I have seen the day I would have tramped five leagues of lea-land, and turned on my toe the whole evening after, as a juggler spins a pewter platter on the point of a needle. But age has clawed me somewhat in his clutch, as the song says, though, if I like the tune and like my partner, I'll dance the hays yet with any merry lass in Warwickshire that writes that unhappy figure four with a round O after it'

If the countess was overwhelmed with the garrulity of this

good dame, Wayland Smith, on his part, had enough to do to sustain and parry the constant attacks made upon him by the indefatigable curiosity of his old acquaintance, Richard Sludge. Nature had given that arch youngster a prying cast of disposition, which matched admirably with his sharp wit, the former inducing him to plant himself as a spy on other people's affairs, and the latter quality leading him perpetually to interfere, after he had made himself master of that which concerned him not. He spent the livelong day in attempting to peer under the countess's muffler, and apparently what he could there discern greatly sharpened his curiosity.

'That sister of thine, Wayland,' he said, 'has a fair neck to have been born in a smithy, and a pretty taper hand to have been used for twirling a spindle, futh, I'll believe in your relationship when the crow's egg is hatched into a cygnet.'

'Go to,' said Wayland, 'thou art a prating boy, and should be breeched for thine assurance.'

'Well,' said the imp, drawing off, 'all I say is, remember you have kept a secret from me, and if I give thee not a Rowland for thine Oliver, my name is not Dickon Sludge!'

This threat, and the distance at which Hobgoblin kept from him for the rest of the way, alarmed Wayland very much, and he suggested to his pretended sister that, on pretext of weariness, she should express a desire to stop two or three miles short of the fair town of Warwick, promising to rejoin the troop in the morning. A small village inn afforded them a resting-place, and it was with secret pleasure that Wayland saw the whole party, including Dickon, pass on, after a courteous farewell, and leave them behind.

'To-morrow, madam,' he said to his charge, 'we will, with your leave, again start early, and reach Kenilworth before the rout which are to assemble there.'

The countess gave assent to the proposal of her faithful guide, but, somewhat to his surprise, said nothing farther on the subject, which left Wayland under the disagreeable uncertainty whether or no she had formed any plan for her own future proceedings, as he knew her situation demanded circumspection, although he was but imperfectly acquainted with all its peculiarities. Concluding, however, that she must have friends within the castle, whose advice and assistance she could safely trust, he supposed his task would be best accomplished by conducting her thither in safety, agreeably to her repeated commands.

CHAPTER XXV

Hark, the bells summon and the bugle calls,
But she the fairest answers not, the tide
Of nobles and of ladies throngs the halls,
But she the loveliest must in secret hide
What eyes were thine, proud prince, which in the gleam
Of yon gay meteors lost that better sense,
That o'er the glow-worm doth the star esteem,
And merit's modest blush o'er courtly insolence?

The Glass Slipper.

THE unfortunate Countess of Leicester had, from her infancy upwards, been treated by those around her with indulgence as unbounded as injudicious. The natural sweetness of her disposition had saved her from becoming insolent and ill-humoured, but the caprice which preferred the handsome and insinuating Leicester before Tressilian, of whose high honour and unalterable affection she herself entertained so firm an opinion — that fatal error, which ruined the happiness of her life, had its origin in the mistaken kindness that had spared her childhood the painful, but most necessary, lesson of submission and self-command. From the same indulgence, it followed that she had only been accustomed to form and to express her wishes, leaving to others the task of fulfilling them, and thus, at the most momentous period of her life, she was alike destitute of presence of mind and of ability to form for herself any reasonable or prudent plan of conduct.

These difficulties pressed on the unfortunate lady with overwhelming force, on the morning which seemed to be the crisis of her fate. Overlooking every intermediate consideration, she had only desired to be at Kenilworth, and to approach her husband's presence, and now, when she was in the vicinity of both, a thousand considerations arose at once upon her mind, startling her with accumulated doubts and dangers, some real, some imaginary, and all exalted and exaggerated by a situation alike helpless and destitute of aid and counsel.

A sleepless night rendered her so weak in the morning that she was altogether unable to attend Wayland's early summons. The trusty guide became extremely distressed on the lady's account, and somewhat alarmed on his own, and was on the point of going alone to Kenilworth, in the hope of discovering Tressilian, and intimating to him the lady's approach, when about nine in the morning he was summoned to attend her. He found her dressed, and ready for resuming her journey, but with a paleness of countenance which alarmed him for her health. She intimated her desire that the horses might be got instantly ready, and resisted with impatience her guide's request that she would take some refreshment before setting forward. 'I have had,' she said, 'a cup of water the wretch who is dragged to execution needs no stronger cordial, and that may serve me which suffices for him, do as I command you.' Wayland Smith still hesitated. 'What would you have?' said she. 'Have I not spoken plainly?'

'Yes, madam,' answered Wayland, 'but may I ask what is your farther purpose? I only desire to know, that I may guide myself by your wishes. The whole country is afloat, and streaming towards the Castle of Kenilworth. It will be difficult travelling thither, even if we had the necessary passports for safe conduct and free admittance. Unknown and unfriended, we may come by mishap. Your ladyship will forgive my speaking my poor mind. Were we not better try to find out the masquers, and again join ourselves with them?' The countess shook her head, and her guide proceeded, 'Then I see but one other remedy.'

'Speak out, then,' said the lady, not displeased, perhaps, that he should thus offer the advice which she was ashamed to ask, 'I believe thee faithful — what wouldst thou counsel?'

'That I should warn Master Tressilian,' said Wayland, 'that you are in this place. I am right certain he would get to horse with a few of Lord Sussex's followers, and ensure your personal safety.'

'And is it to *me* you advise,' said the countess, 'to put myself under the protection of Sussex, the unworthy rival of the noble Leicester?' Then, seeing the surprise with which Wayland stared upon her, and afraid of having too strongly intimated her interest in Leicester, she added, 'And for Tressilian, it must not be mentioned not to him, I charge you, my unhappy name, it would but double *my* misfortunes, and involve *him* in dangers beyond the power of rescue.' She paused, but when she ob

served that Wayland continued to look on her with that anxious and uncertain gaze which indicated a doubt whether her brain was settled, she assumed an air of composure, and added, 'Do thou but guide me to Kenilworth Castle, good fellow, and thy task is ended, since I will then judge what farther is to be done. Thou hast yet been true to me, here is something that will make thee rich amends.'

She offered the artist a ring, containing a valuable stone. Wayland looked at it, hesitated a moment, and then returned it. 'Not,' he said, 'that I am above your kindness, madam, being but a poor fellow, who have been forced, God help me' to live by worse shifts than the bounty of such a person as you. But, as my old master the farmer used to say to his customers, "No cure, no pay." We are not yet in Kenilworth Castle, and it is time enough to discharge your guide, as they say, when you take your boots off. I trust in God your ladyship is as well assured of fitting reception when you arrive as you may hold yourself certain of my best endeavours to conduct you thither safely. I go to get the horses. meantime, let me pray you once more, as your poor physician as well as guide, to take some sustenance.'

'I will—I will,' said the lady, hastily. 'Begone—begone instantly!' It is in vain I assume audacity,' said she, when he left the room, 'even this poor groom sees through my affectation of courage, and fathoms the very ground of my fears.'

She then attempted to follow her guide's advice by taking some food, but was compelled to desist, as the effort to swallow even a single morsel gave her so much uneasiness as amounted wellnigh to suffocation. A moment afterwards the horses appeared at the latticed window, the lady mounted, and found that relief from the free air and change of place which is frequently experienced in similar circumstances.

It chanced well for the countess's purpose that Wayland Smith, whose previous wandering and unsettled life had made him acquainted with almost all England, was intimate with all the by-roads, as well as direct communications, through the beautiful county of Warwick. For such and so great was the throng which flocked in all directions towards Kenilworth, to see the entry of Elizabeth into that splendid mansion of her prime favourite, that the principal roads were actually blocked up and interrupted, and it was only by circuitous by-paths that the travellers could proceed on their journey.

The Queen's purveyors had been abroad, sweeping the farms

and villages of those articles usually exacted during a royal progress, and for which the owners were afterwards to obtain a tardy payment from the Board of Green Cloth. The Earl of Leicester's household officers had been scouring the country for the same purpose, and many of his friends and allies, both near and remote, took this opportunity of ingratiating themselves by sending large quantities of provisions and delicacies of all kinds, with game in huge numbers, and whole tuns of the best liquors, foreign and domestic. Thus the highroads were filled with droves of bullocks, sheep, calves, and hogs, and choked with loaded wains, whose axle-trees cracked under their burdens of wine-casks and hogsheads of ale, and huge hampers of grocery goods, and slaughtered game, and salted provisions, and sacks of floor. Perpetual stoppages took place as these wains became entangled, and their rude drivers, swearing and brawling till their wild passions were fully raised, began to debate precedence with their waggon whips and quarter staves, which occasional riots were usually quieted by a purveyor, deputy-marshal's-man, or some other person in authority, breaking the heads of both parties.

Here were, besides, players and mummers, jugglers and showmen, of every description, traversing in joyous bands the paths which led to the Palace of Princely Pleasure, for so the travelling minstrels had termed Kenilworth in the songs which already had come forth in anticipation of the revels which were there expected¹. In the midst of this motley show, mendicants were exhibiting their real or pretended miseries, forming a strange, though common, contrast betwixt the vanities and the sorrows of human existence. All these floated along with the immense tide of population, whom mere curiosity had drawn together, and where the mechanic, in his leather apron, elbowed the dink and dainty dame, his city mistress, where clowns, with hobnailed shoes, were treading on the kibes of substantial burghers and gentlemen of worship, and where Joan of the dairy, with robust pace, and red, sturdy arms, rowed her way onward, amongst those prim and pretty moppets whose sires were knights and squires.

The thropg and confusion was, however, of a gay and cheerful character. All came forth to see and to enjoy, and all laughed at the trifling inconveniences which at another time might have chafed their temper. Excepting the occasional brawls which we have mentioned among that irritable race the

¹ See Pilgrims to Kenilworth Note 12

carmen, the mingled sounds which arose from the multitude were those of light-hearted mirth and tiptoe jollity. The musicians preluded on their instruments, the minstrels hummed their songs, the licensed jester whooped betwixt mirth and madness as he brandished his bauble, the morris-dancers jangled their bells, the rustics halloo'd and whistled, men laughed loud, and maidens giggled shrill, while many a broad jest flew like a shuttlecock from one party, to be caught in the air and returned from the opposite side of the road by another, at which it was aimed

No infliction can be so distressing to a mind absorbed in melancholy as being plunged into a scene of mirth and revelry, forming an accompaniment so dissonant from its own feelings. Yet, in the case of the Countess of Leicester, the noise and tumult of this giddy scene distracted her thoughts, and rendered her this sad service, that it became impossible for her to brood on her own misery, or to form terrible anticipations of her approaching fate. She travelled on, like one in a dream, following implicitly the guidance of Wayland, who, with great address, now threaded his way through the general throng of passengers, now stood still until a favourable opportunity occurred of again moving forward, and frequently turning altogether out of the direct road, followed some circuitous by-path, which brought them into the highway again, after having given them the opportunity of traversing a considerable way with greater ease and rapidity.

It was thus he avoided Warwick, within whose castle (that fairest monument of ancient and chivalrous splendour which yet remains uninjured by time) Elizabeth had passed the previous night, and where she was to tarry until past noon, at that time the general hour of dinner throughout England, after which repast she was to proceed to Kenilworth. In the meanwhile, each passing group had something to say in the sovereign's praise, though not absolutely without the usual mixture of satire which qualifies more or less our estimate of our neighbours, especially if they chance to be also our betters.

'Heard you,' said one, 'how graciously she spoke to Master Bailiff and the Recorder, and to good Master Griffin, the preacher, as they kneeled down at her coach window?'

'Ay, and how she said to little Aglionby, "Master Recorder, men would have persuaded me that you were afraid of me, but truly I think, so well did you reckon up to me the virtues of a sovereign, that I have more reason to be afraid of you" And

then with what grace she took the fair wrought purse with the twenty gold sovereigns, seeming as though she would not willingly handle it, and yet taking it withal'

'Ay — ay,' said another, 'her fingers closed on it pretty willingly methought, when all was done, and methought, too, she weighed them for a second in her hand, as she would say, "I hope they be avoirdupois"'

'She needed not, neighbour,' said a third, 'it is only when the corporation pay the accounts of a poor handicraft like me that they put him off with clipt coin. Well, there is a God above all. Little Master Recorder, since that is the word, will be greater now than ever'

'Come, good neighbour,' said the first speaker, 'be not envious. She is a good queen, and a generous. She gave the purse to the Earl of Leicester'

'I envious? beshrew thy heart for the word!' replied the handicraft. 'But she will give all to the Earl of Leicester anon, methinks.'

'You are turning ill, lady,' said Wayland Smith to the Countess of Leicester, and proposed that she should draw off from the road, and halt till she recovered. But, subduing her feelings at this and different speeches to the same purpose which caught her ear as they passed on, she insisted that her guide should proceed to Kenilworth with all the haste which the numerous impediments of their journey permitted. Meanwhile, Wayland's anxiety at her repeated fits of indisposition and her obvious distraction of mind, was hourly increasing, and he became extremely desirous that, according to her reiterated requests, she should be safely introduced into the castle, where, he doubted not, she was secure of a kind reception, though she seemed unwilling to reveal on whom she reposed her hopes

'An I were once rid of this peril,' thought he, 'and if any man shall find me playing squire of the body to a damosel-errant, he shall have leave to beat my brains out with my own sledge-hammer!'

At length the princely castle appeared, upon improving which, and the domains around, the Earl of Leicester had, it is said, expended sixty thousand pounds sterling, a sum equal to half a million of our present money

The outer wall of this splendid and gigantic structure inclosed seven acres, a part of which was occupied by extensive stables, and by a pleasure garden, with its trim arbours and

parterres, and the rest formed the large base-court, or outer yard, of the noble castle. The lordly structure itself, which rose near the centre of this spacious inclosure, was composed of a huge pile of magnificent castellated buildings, apparently of different ages, surrounding an inner court, and bearing, in the names attached to each portion of the magnificent mass, and in the armorial bearings which were there blazoned, the emblems of mighty chiefs who had long passed away, and whose history, could Ambition have lent ear to it, might have read a lesson to the haughty favourite who had now acquired, and was augmenting, the fair domain. A large and massive keep, which formed the citadel of the castle, was of uncertain though great antiquity. It bore the name of Cæsar, perhaps from its resemblance to that in the Tower of London so called. Some antiquaries ascribe its foundation to the time of Kenelph, from whom the castle had its name, a Saxon king of Mercia, and others to an early era after the Norman Conquest. On the exterior walls frowned the scutcheon of the Clintons, by whom they were founded in the reign of Henry I, and of the yet more redoubted Simon de Montfort, by whom, during the Barons' Wars, Kenilworth was long held out against Henry III. Here Mortimer, Earl of March, famous alike for his rise and his fall, had once gaily revelled in Kenilworth, while his dethroned sovereign, Edward II, languished in its dungeons. Old John of Gaunt, 'time-honoured Lancaster,' had widely extended the castle, erecting that noble and massive pile which yet bears the name of Lancaster's Buildings; and Leicester himself had outdone the former possessors, princely and powerful as they were, by erecting another immense structure, which now lies crushed under its own ruins, the monument of its owner's ambition. The external wall of this royal castle was, on the south and west sides, adorned and defended by a lake partly artificial, across which Leicester had constructed a stately bridge, that Elizabeth might enter the castle by a path hitherto untrodden, instead of the usual entrance to the northward, over which he had erected a gate-house, or barbican, which still exists, and is equal in extent, and superior in architecture, to the baronial castle of many a northern chief.

Beyond the lake lay an extensive chase, full of red deer, fallow deer, roes, and every species of game, and abounding with lofty trees, from amongst which the extended front and massive towers of the castle were seen to rise in majesty and beauty. We cannot but add, that of this lordly palace, where

princes feasted and heroes fought, now in the bloody earnest of storm and siege, and now in the games of chivalry, where beauty dealt the prize which valour won, all is now desolate. The bed of the lake is but a rushy swamp, and the massive ruins of the castle only serve to show what their splendour once was, and to impress on the musing visitor the transitory value of human possessions, and the happiness of those who enjoy a humble lot in virtuous contentment.

It was with far different feelings that the unfortunate Countess of Leicester viewed those grey and massive towers, when she first beheld them rise above the embowering and richly shaded woods, over which they seemed to preside. She, the undoubted wife of the great earl, of Elizabeth's minion and England's mighty favourite, was approaching the presence of her husband and that husband's sovereign under the protection, rather than the guidance, of a poor juggler, and though unquestioned mistress of that proud castle, whose lightest word ought to have had force sufficient to make its gates leap from their massive hinges to receive her, yet she could not conceal from herself the difficulty and peril which she must experience in gaining admission into her own halls.

The risk and difficulty, indeed, seemed to increase every moment, and at length threatened altogether to put a stop to her farther progress, at the great gate leading to a broad and fair road, which, traversing the breadth of the chase for the space of two miles, and commanding several most beautiful views of the castle and lake, terminated at the newly constructed bridge, to which it was an appendage, and which was destined to form the Queen's approach to the castle on that memorable occasion.

Here the countess and Wayland found the gate at the end of this avenue, which opened on the Warwick road, guarded by a body of the Queen's mounted yeomen of the guard, armed in corslets richly carved and gilded, and wearing morions instead of bonnets, having their carabines resting with the butt-end on their thighs. These guards, distinguished for strength and stature, who did duty wherever the Queen went in person, were here stationed under the direction of a pursuivant, graced with the bear and ragged staff on his arm, as belonging to the Earl of Leicester, and peremptorily refused all admittance, excepting to such as were guests invited to the festival, or persons who were to perform some part in the mirthful exhibitions which were proposed.

The press was of consequence great around the entrance, and persons of all kinds presented every sort of plea for admittance, to which the guards turned an invariable ear, pleading in return to fair words and even to fair offer, the strictness of their orders, founded on the Queen's well known dislike to the rude pressing of a multitude. With those whom such reasons did not serve, they dealt more rudely, repelling them without ceremony by the pressure of their powerful barbed horses, and good round blows from the stock of their carbines. These last manœuvres produced undulations amongst the crowd which rendered Wayland much afraid that he might perforce be separated from his charge in the throng. Neither did he know what excuse to make in order to obtain admittance, and he was debating the matter in his head with great uncertainty, when the earl's pursuivant, having cast an eye upon him, exclaimed, to his no small surprise, 'Yeomen, make room for the fellow in the orange-tawny cloak. Come forward, sir coxcomb, and make haste. What, in the fiend's name, has kept you waiting? Come forward with your bale of woman's gear.'

While the pursuivant gave Wayland this pressing yet uncourteous invitation, which, for a minute or two, he could not imagine was applied to him, the yeomen speedily made a free passage for him, while, only cautioning his companion to keep the muffler close around her face, he entered the gate leading her palfrey, but with such a drooping crest, and such a look of conscious fear and anxiety, that the crowd, not greatly pleased at any rate with the preference bestowed upon them, accompanied their admission with hooting and a loud laugh of derision.

Admitted thus within the chase, though with no very flattering notice or distinction, Wayland and his charge rode forward, musing what difficulties it would be next their lot to encounter, through the broad avenue, which was sentinelled on either side by a long line of retainers, armed with swords and partizans, richly dressed in the Earl of Leicester's liveries, and bearing his cognizance of the bear and ragged staff, each placed within three paces of each other, so as to line the whole road from the entrance into the park to the bridge. And, indeed, when the lady obtained the first commanding view of the castle, with its stately towers rising from within a long sweeping line of outward walls, ornamented with battlements, and turrets, and platforms at every point of defence, with many a banner streaming from its walls, and such a bustle of gay crests and waving plumes disposed on the terraces and battlements, and all the gay

and gorgeous scene, her heart, unaccustomed to such splendour, sank as if it died within her, and for a moment she asked herself what she had offered up to Leicester to deserve to become the partner of this princely splendour. But her pride and generous spirit resisted the whisper which bade her despair.

'I have given him,' she said, 'all that woman has to give. Name and fame, heart and hand, have I given the lord of all this magnificence at the altar, and England's queen could give him no more. He is my husband, I am his wife. Whom God hath joined, man cannot sunder. I will be bold in claiming my right, even the bolder, that I come thus unexpected, and thus forlorn. I know my noble Dudley well! He will be something impatient at my disobeying him, but Amy will weep, and Dudley will forgive her.'

These meditations were interrupted by a cry of surprise from her guide Wayland, who suddenly felt himself grasped firmly round the body by a pair of long thin black arms, belonging to some one who had dropped himself out of an oak-tree upon the croup of his horse, amidst the shouts of laughter which burst from the sentinels.

'This must be the devil or Flibbertigibbet again!' said Wayland, after a vain struggle to disengage himself, and unhorse the urchin who clung to him. 'Do Kenilworth oaks bear such acorns?'

'In sooth do they, Master Wayland,' said his unexpected adjunct, 'and many others too hard for you to crack, for as old as you are, without my teaching you. How would you have passed the pursuivant at the upper gate yonder, had not I warned him our principal juggler was to follow us? And here have I waited for you, having clambered up into the tree from the top of the wain, and I suppose they are all mad for want of me by this time.'

'Nay, then, thou art a limb of the devil in good earnest,' said Wayland. 'I give thee way, good imp, and will walk by thy counsel, only as thou art powerful, be merciful.'

As he spoke, they approached a strong tower, at the south extremity of the long bridge we have mentioned, which served to protect the outer gateway of the Castle of Kenilworth.

Under such disastrous circumstances, and in such singular company, did the unfortunate Countess of Leicester approach for the first time the magnificent abode of her almost princely husband.¹

¹ See Amy Robsart at Kenilworth. Note 13

CHAPTER XXVI

Saug Have you the lion's part written? Pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study

Quince. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Midsummer Night's Dream

WHEN the Countess of Leicester arrived at the outer gate of the Castle of Kenilworth, she found the tower, beneath which its ample portal arch opened, guarded in a singular manner. Upon the battlements were placed gigantic warders, with clubs, battle-axes, and other implements of ancient warfare, designed to represent the soldiers of King Arthur; those primitive Britons by whom, according to romantic tradition, the castle had been first tenanted, though history carried back its antiquity only to the times of the Heptarchy. Some of these tremendous figures were real men, dressed up with vizards and buskins, others were mere pageants composed of pasteboard and buckram, which, viewed from beneath, and mingled with those that were real, formed a sufficiently striking representation of what was intended. But the gigantic porter who waited at the gate beneath, and actually discharged the duties of warder, owed none of his terrors to fictitious means. He was a man whose huge stature, thewes, sinews, and bulk in proportion, would have enabled him to enact Colbrand, Ascapart, or any other giant of romance, without raising himself nearer to heaven even by the altitude of a chopin¹. The legs and knees of this son of Anak were bare, as were his arms, from a span below the shoulder, but his feet were defended with sandals, fastened with cross straps of scarlet leather, studded with brazen knobs. A close jerkin of scarlet velvet, looped with gold, with short breeches of the same, covered his body and part of his limbs, and he wore on his shoulders, instead of a cloak, the skin of a black bear. The head of this formidable person was uncovered, except by his shaggy black hair, which

¹ See Note 14.

descended on either side around features of that huge, lumpish, and heavy cast which are often annexed to men of very uncommon size, and which, notwithstanding some distinguished exceptions, have created a general prejudice against giants, as being a dull and sullen kind of persons. This tremendous warder was appropriately armed with a heavy club spiked with steel. In fine, he represented excellently one of those giants of popular romance who figure in every fairy tale or legend of knight errantry.

The demeanour of this modern Titan, when Wayland Smith bent his attention to him, had in it something arguing much mental embarrassment and vexation, for sometimes he sat down for an instant on a massive stone bench, which seemed placed for his accommodation beside the gateway, and then ever and anon he started up, scratching his huge head, and striding to and fro on his post, like one under a fit of impatience and anxiety. It was while the porter was pacing before the gate in this agitated manner that Wayland, modestly, yet as a matter of course (not, however, without some mental misgiving), was about to pass him and enter the portal arch. The porter, however, stopped his progress, bidding him, in a thundering voice, 'Stand back!' and enforcing his injunction by heaving up his steel-shod mace, and dashing it on the ground before Wayland's horse's nose with such vehemence that the pavement flashed fire and the archway rang to the clamour. Wayland, availing himself of Dickie's hint, began to state that he belonged to a band of performers to which his presence was indispensable, that he had been accidentally detained behind, and much to the same purpose. But the warder was inexorable, and kept muttering and murmuring something betwixt his teeth, which Wayland could make little of, and addressing betwixt whiles a refusal of admittance, couched in language which was but too intelligible. A specimen of his speech might run thus: 'What, how now, my masters? (To himself) Here's a stir—here's a coil. (Then to Wayland) You are a loitering knave, and shall have no entrance. (Again to himself) Here's a throng—here's a thrusting. I shall never get through with it. Here's a—humph—ha. (To Wayland) Back from the gate, or I'll break the pate of thee. (Once more to himself) Here's a—no, I shall never get through it.'

'Stand still,' whispered Flibbertigibbet into Wayland's ear, 'I know where the shoe pinches, and will tame him in an instant.'

He dropped down from the horse, and skipping up to the

porter, plucked him by the tail of the bearskin, so as to induce him to decline his huge head, and whispered something in his ear. Not at the command of the lord of some Eastern talisman did ever Afrite change his horrid frown into a look of smooth submission more suddenly than the gigantic porter of Kenilworth relaxed the terrors of his look at the instant Flibbertigibbet's whisper reached his ears. He flung his club upon the ground and caught up Dickie Sludge, raising him to such a distance from the earth as might have proved perilous had he chanced to let him slip.

'It is even so,' he said, with a thundering sound of exultation — 'it is even so, my little dandieprat. But who the devil could teach it thee?'

'Do not thou care about that,' said Flibbertigibbet, 'but——' he looked at Wayland and the lady, and then sunk what he had to say in a whisper, which needed not be a loud one, as the giant held him for his convenience close to his ear. The porter then gave Dickie a warm caress, and set him on the ground with the same care which a careful housewife uses in replacing a cracked china cup upon her mantelpiece, calling out at the same time to Wayland and the lady, 'In with you — in with you, and take heed how you come too late another day when I chance to be porter.'

'Ay — ay, in with you,' added Flibbertigibbet, 'I must stay a short space with my honest Philistine, my Goliath of Gath here, but I will be with you anon, and at the bottom of all your secrets, were they as deep and dark as the castle dungeon.'

'I do believe thou wouldst,' said Wayland, 'but I trust the secret will soon be out of my keeping, and then I shall care the less whether thou or any one knows it.'

They now crossed the entrance tower, which obtained the name of the Gallery Tower from the following circumstance — The whole bridge, extending from the entrance to another tower on the opposite side of the lake, called Mortimer's Tower, was so disposed as to make a spacious tilt-yard, about one hundred and thirty yards in length and ten in breadth, strewed with the finest sand, and defended on either side by strong and high palisades. The broad and fair gallery, destined for the ladies who were to witness the feats of chivalry presented on this area, was erected on the northern side of the outer tower to which it gave name. Our travellers passed slowly along the bridge or tilt-yard, and arrived at Mortimer's Tower, at its farthest extremity, through which the approach led into the outer or base

court of the castle Mortimer's Tower bore on its front the scutcheon of the Earl of March, whose daring ambition overthrew the throne of Edward II., and aspired to share his power with the 'She-wolf of France,' to whom the unhappy monarch was wedded. The gate which opened under this ominous memorial was guarded by many warders in rich liveries, but they offered no opposition to the entrance of the countess and her guide, who, having passed by license of the principal porter at the Gallery Tower, were not, it may be supposed, liable to interruption from his deputies. They entered accordingly, in silence, the great outward court of the castle, having then full before them that vast and lordly pile, with all its stately towers, each gate open, as if in sign of unlimited hospitality, and the apartments filled with noble guests of every degree, besides dependants, retainers, domestics of every description, and all the appendages and promoters of mirth and revelry.

Amid this stately and busy scene, Wayland halted his horse, and looked upon the lady, as if awaiting her commands what was next to be done, since they had safely reached the place of destination. As she remained silent, Wayland, after waiting a minute or two, ventured to ask her, in direct terms, what were her next commands. She raised her hand to her forehead, as if in the act of collecting her thoughts and resolution, while she answered him in a low and suppressed voice, like the murmurs of one who speaks in a dream. 'Commands! I may indeed claim right to command, but who is there will obey me?'

Then suddenly raising her head, like one who had formed a decisive resolution, she addressed a gaily dressed domestic, who was crossing the court with importance and bustle in his countenance. 'Stop, sir,' she said, 'I desire to speak with the Earl of Leicester.'

'With whom, an it please you?' said the man, surprised at the demand, and then looking upon the mean equipage of her who used towards him such a tone of authority, he added, with insolence, 'Why, what Bess of Bedlam is this, would ask to see my lord on such a day as the present?'

'Friend,' said the countess, 'be not insolent, my business with the earl is most urgent.'

'You must get some one else to do it, were it thrice as urgent,' said the fellow. 'I should summon my lord from the Queen's royal presence to do *your* business, should I? I were like to be thanked with a horse whip. I marvel our old porter took not measure of such ware with his club, instead of giving

them passage, but his brain is addled with getting his speech by heart'

Two or three persons stopped, attracted by the fleeing way in which the serving-man expressed himself, and Wayland, alarmed both for himself and the lady, hastily addressed himself to one who appeared the most civil, and thrusting a piece of money into his hand, held a moment's counsel with him on the subject of finding a place of temporary retreat for the lady. The person to whom he spoke, being one in some authority, rebuked the others for their incivility, and commanding one fellow to take care of the strangers' horses, he desired them to follow him. The countess retained presence of mind sufficient to see that it was absolutely necessary she should comply with his request, and, leaving the rude lackeys and grooms to crack their brutal jests about light heads, light heels, and so forth, Wayland and she followed in silence the deputy-usher, who undertook to be their conductor.

They entered the inner court of the castle by the great gateway, which extended betwixt the principal keep, or donjon, called Cæsar's Tower, and a stately building which passed by the name of King Henry's Lodging, and were thus placed in the centre of the noble pile, which presented on its different fronts magnificent specimens of every species of castellated architecture, from the Conquest to the reign of Elizabeth, with the appropriate style and ornaments of each.

Across this inner court also they were conducted by their guide to a small but strong tower, occupying the north-east angle of the building adjacent to the great hall, and filling up a space betwixt the immense range of kitchens and the end of the great hall itself. The lower part of this tower was occupied by some of the household officers of Leicester, owing to its convenient vicinity to the places where their duty lay, but in the upper story, which was reached by a narrow winding stair, was a small octangular chamber, which, in the great demand for lodgings, had been on the present occasion fitted up for the reception of guests, though generally said to have been used as a place of confinement for some unhappy person who had been there murdered. Tradition called this prisoner Mervyn, and transferred his name to the tower. That it had been used as a prison was not improbable, for the floor of each story was arched, the walls of tremendous thickness, while the space of the chamber did not exceed fifteen feet in diameter. The window, however, was pleasant, though narrow, and commanded

a delightful view of what was called the Pleasance — a space of ground inclosed and decorated with arches, trophies, statues, fountains, and other architectural monuments, which formed one access from the castle itself into the garden. There was a bed in the apartment, and other preparations for the reception of a guest, to which the countess paid but slight attention, her notice being instantly arrested by the sight of writing materials, placed on the table (not very commonly to be found in the bedrooms of those days), which instantly suggested the idea of writing to Leicester, and remaining private until she had received his answer.

The deputy-usher, having introduced them into this commodious apartment, courteously asked Wayland, whose generosity he had experienced, whether he could do anything farther for his service. Upon receiving a gentle hint that some refreshment would not be unacceptable, he presently conveyed the smith to the buttery hatch, where dressed provisions of all sorts were distributed, with hospitable profusion, to all who asked for them. Wayland was readily supplied with some light provisions, such as he thought would best suit the faded appetite of the lady, and did not omit the opportunity of himself making a hasty but hearty meal on more substantial fare. He then returned to the apartment in the turret, where he found the countess, who had finished her letter to Leicester, and, in lieu of a seal and silken thread, had secured it with a braid of her own beautiful tresses, fastened by what is called a true-love knot.

'Good friend,' said she to Wayland, 'whom God hath sent to aid me at my utmost need, I do beseech thee, as the last trouble you shall take for an unfortunate lady, to deliver this letter to the noble Earl of Leicester. Be it received as it may,' she said, with features agitated betwixt hope and fear, 'thou, good fellow, shalt have no more cumber with me. But I hope the best, and if ever lady made a poor man rich, thou hast surely deserved it at my hand, should my happy days ever come round again. Give it, I pray you, into Lord Leicester's own hand, and mark how he looks on receiving it.'

Wayland, on his part, readily undertook the commission, but anxiously prayed the lady, in his turn, to partake of some refreshment, in which he at length prevailed, more through importunity, and her desire to see him begone on his errand, than from any inclination the countess felt to comply with his request. He then left her, advising her to lock her door on the inside, and not to stir from her little apartment, and went

to seek an opportunity of discharging her errand, as well as of carrying into effect a purpose of his own which circumstances had induced him to form.

In fact, from the conduct of the lady during the journey, her long fits of profound silence, the irresolution and uncertainty which appeared to pervade all her movements, and the obvious incapacity of thinking and acting for herself, under which she seemed to labour, Wayland had formed the not improbable opinion that the difficulties of her situation had in some degree affected her understanding.

When she had escaped from the seclusion of Cumnor Place, and the dangers to which she was there exposed, it would have seemed her most rational course to retire to her father's or elsewhere, at a distance from the power of those by whom these dangers had been created. When, instead of doing so, she demanded to be conveyed to Kenilworth, Wayland had, been only able to account for her conduct, by supposing that she meant to put herself under the tutelage of Tressilian, and to appeal to the protection of the Queen. But now, instead of following this natural course, she entrusted him with a letter to Leicester, the patron of Varney, and within whose jurisdiction at least, if not under his express authority, all the evils she had already suffered were inflicted upon her. This seemed an unsafe, and even a desperate, measure, and Wayland felt anxiety for his own safety, as well as that of the lady, should he execute her commission before he had secured the advice and countenance of a protector. He therefore resolved, before delivering the letter to Leicester, that he would seek out Tressilian, and communicate to him the arrival of the lady at Kenilworth, and thus at once rid himself of all farther responsibility and devolve the task of guiding and protecting this unfortunate lady upon the patron who had at first employed him in her service.

'He will be a better judge than I am,' said Wayland, 'whether she is to be gratified in this humour of appeal to my Lord of Leicester, which seems like an act of insanity, and, therefore, I will turn the matter over on his hands, deliver him the letter, receive what they list to give me by way of guerdon, and then show the Castle of Kenilworth a pair of light heels, for, after the work I have been engaged in, it will be, I fear, neither a safe nor wholesome place of residence, and I would rather shoe colts on the coldest common in England than share in their gayest revels.'

CHAPTER XXVII

In my time I have seen a boy do wonders.
Robin, the red tinker, had a boy
Would ha' run through a cat-hole

The Coxcomb

AMID the universal bustle which filled the castle and its environs, it was no easy matter to find out any individual, and Wayland was still less likely to light upon Tressilian, whom he sought so anxiously, because, sensible of the danger of attracting attention, in the circumstances in which he was placed, he dared not make general inquiries among the retainers or domestics of Leicester. He learned, however, by indirect questions, that, in all probability, Tressilian must have been one of a large party of gentlemen in attendance on the Earl of Sussex, who had accompanied their patron that morning to Kenilworth, when Leicester had received them with marks of the most formal respect and distinction. He farther learned that both earls, with their followers, and many other nobles, knights, and gentlemen, had taken horse, and gone towards Warwick several hours since, for the purpose of escorting the Queen to Kenilworth.

Her Majesty's arrival, like other great events, was delayed from hour to hour, and it was now announced by a breathless post that, her Majesty being detained by her gracious desire to receive the homage of her lieges who had thronged to wait upon her at Warwick, it would be the hour of twilight ere she entered the castle. The intelligence released for a time those who were upon duty in the immediate expectation of the Queen's appearance, and ready to play their part in the solemnities with which it was to be accompanied, and Wayland, seeing several horsemen enter the castle, was not without hopes that Tressilian might be of the number. That he might not lose an opportunity of meeting his patron in the event of this being the case, Wayland placed himself in the

base-court of the castle, near Mortimer's Tower, and watched every one who went or came by the bridge, the extremity of which was protected by that building. Thus stationed, nobody could enter or leave the castle without his observation, and most anxiously did he study the garb and countenance of every horseman, as, passing from under the opposite Gallery Tower, they paced slowly, or curveted, along the tilt-yard, and approached the entrance of the base-court.

But while Wayland gazed thus eagerly to discover him whom he saw not, he was pulled by the sleeve by one by whom he himself would not willingly have been seen.

This was Dickie Sludge, or Flibbertigibbet, who, like the imp whose name he bore, and whom he had been accoutred in order to resemble, seemed to be ever at the ear of those who thought least of him. Whatever were Wayland's internal feelings, he judged it necessary to express pleasure at their unexpected meeting.

'Ha! is it thou, my minikin — my miller's thumb — my prince of cacodemons — my little mouse?'

'Ay,' said Dickie, 'the mouse which gnawed asunder the toils, just when the lion who was caught in them began to look wonderfully like an ass.'

'Why, thou little hop-the-gutter, thou art as sharp as vinegar this afternoon! But tell me, how didst thou come off with yonder jolter-headed giant, whom I left thee with? I was afraid he would have stripped thy clothes, and so swallowed thee, as men peel and eat a roasted chestnut.'

'Had he done so,' replied the boy, 'he would have had more brains in his guts than ever he had in his noddle. But the giant is a courteous monster, and more grateful than many other folk whom I have helped at a pinch, Master Wayland Smith.'

'Beshrew me, Flibbertigibbet,' replied Wayland, 'but thou art sharper than a Sheffield whittle! I would I knew by what charm you muzzled yonder old bear.'

'Ay, that is in your own manner,' answered Dickie, 'you think fine speeches will pass muster instead of good-will. However, as to this honest porter, you must know that, when we presented ourselves at the gate yonder, his brain was overburdened with a speech that had been penned for him, and which proved rather an overmatch for his gigantic faculties. Now this same pithy oration had been indited, like sundry others, by my learned magister, Erasmus Holiday, so I had

heard it often enough to remember every line As soon as I heard him blundering and floundering, like a fish upon dry land, through the first verse, and perceived him at a stand, I knew where the shoe pinched, and helped him to the next word, when he caught me up in an ecstasy, even as you saw but now I promised, as the price of your admission, to hide me under his bearish gaberdine and prompt him in the hour of need. I have just now been getting some food in the castle, and am about to return to him.'

'That's right — that's right, my dear Dickie,' replied Wayland, 'haste thee, for Heaven's sake! else the poor giant will be utterly disconsolate for want of his dwarfish auxiliary Away with thee, Dickie!'

'Ay — ay!' answered the boy 'Away with Dickie, when we have got what good of him we can You will not let me know the story of this lady, then, who is as much sister of thine as I am?'

'Why, what good would it do thee, thou silly elf?' said Wayland.

'Oh, stand ye on these terms?' said the boy 'Well, I care not greatly about the matter, only, I never smell out a secret, but I try to be either at the right or the wrong end of it, and so good evening to ye.'

'Nay, but, Dickie,' said Wayland, who knew the boy's restless and intriguing disposition too well not to fear his enmity — 'stay, my dear Dickie part not with old friends so shortly! Thou shalt know all I know of the lady one day'

'Ay!' said Dickie, 'and that day may prove a nigh one. Fare thee well, Wayland, I will to my large limbed friend, who, if he have not so sharp a wit as some folk, is at least more grateful for the service which other folk render him. And so again, good evening to ye.'

So saying, he cast a somerset through the gateway, and, lighting on the bridge, ran, with the extraordinary agility which was one of his distinguishing attributes, towards the Gallery Tower, and was out of sight in an instant.

'I would to God I were safe out of this castle again!' prayed Wayland, internally, 'for now that this mischievous imp has put his finger in the pie, it cannot but prove a mess fit for the devil's eating I would to Heaven Master Tressilian would appear!'

Tressilian, whom he was thus anxiously expecting in one direction, had returned to Kenilworth by another access. It

was indeed true, as Wayland had conjectured, that, in the earlier part of the day, he had accompanied the earls on their cavalcade towards Warwick, not without hope that he might in that town hear some tidings of his emissary. Being disappointed in this expectation, and observing Varney amongst Leicester's attendants, seeming as if he had some purpose of advancing to and addressing him, he conceived, in the present circumstances, it was wisest to avoid the interview. He therefore left the presence-chamber when the high-sheriff of the county was in the very midst of his dutiful address to her Majesty, and, mounting his horse, rode back to Kenilworth by a remote and circuitous road, and entered the castle by a small sally-port in the western wall, at which he was readily admitted as one of the followers of the Earl of Sussex, towards whom Leicester had commanded the utmost courtesy to be exercised. It was thus that he met not Wayland, who was impatiently watching his arrival, and whom he himself would have been, at least, equally desirous to see.

Having delivered his horse to the charge of his attendant, he walked for a space in the Pleasance and in the garden, rather to indulge in comparative solitude his own reflections than to admire those singular beauties of nature and art which the magnificence of Leicester had there assembled. The greater part of the persons of condition had left the castle for the present, to form part of the earl's cavalcade, others, who remained behind, were on the battlements, outer walls, and towers, eager to view the splendid spectacle of the royal entry. The garden, therefore, while every other part of the castle resounded with the human voice, was silent, but for the whispering of the leaves, the emulous warbling of the tenants of a large aviary, with their happier companions who remained denizens of the free air, and the plashing of the fountains, which, forced into the air from sculptures of fantastic and grotesque forms, fell down with ceaseless sound into the great basins of Italian marble.

The melancholy thoughts of Tressilian cast a gloomy shade on all the objects with which he was surrounded. He compared the magnificent scenes which he here traversed with the deep woodland and wild moorland which surrounded Lidcote Hall, and the image of Amy Robsart glided like a phantom through every landscape which his imagination summoned up. Nothing is perhaps more dangerous to the future happiness of

men of deep thought and retired habits than the entertaining an early, long, and unfortunate attachment. It frequently sinks so deep into the mind that it becomes their dream by night and their vision by day, mixes itself with every source of interest and enjoyment, and, when blighted and withered by final disappointment, it seems as if the springs of the spirit were dried up along with it. This aching of the heart, this languishing after a shadow which has lost all the gaiety of its colouring, this dwelling on the remembrance of a dream from which we have been long roughly awakened, is the weakness of a gentle and generous heart, and it was that of Tressilian.

He himself at length became sensible of the necessity of forcing other objects upon his mind, and for this purpose he left the Pleasance, in order to mingle with the noisy crowd upon the walls, and view the preparation for the pageants. But as he left the garden, and heard the busy hum, mixed with music and laughter, which floated around him, he felt an uncontrollable reluctance to mix with society whose feelings were in a tone so different from his own, and resolved, instead of doing so, to retire to the chamber assigned him, and employ himself in study until the tolling of the great castle bell should announce the arrival of Elizabeth.

Tressilian crossed accordingly by the passage betwixt the immense range of kitchens and the great hall, and ascended to the third story of Mervyn's Tower, and applying himself to the door of the small apartment which had been allotted to him, was surprised to find it was locked. He then recollected that the deputy-chamberlain had given him a master key, advising him, in the present confused state of the castle, to keep his door as much shut as possible. He applied this key to the lock, the bolt revolved, he entered, and in the same instant saw a female form seated in the apartment, and recognised that form to be Amy Robsart. His first idea was, that a heated imagination had raised the image on which it doted into visible existence, his second, that he beheld an apparition, the third and abiding conviction, that it was Amy herself, paler, indeed, and thinner than in the days of heedless happiness, when she possessed the form and hue of a wood-nymph, with the beauty of a sylph, but still Amy, unequalled in loveliness by aught which had ever visited his eyes.

The astonishment of the countess was scarce less than that of Tressilian, although it was of shorter duration, because she had heard from Wayland that he was in the castle. She had

started up on his first entrance, and now stood facing him, the paleness of her cheeks having given way to a deep blush

'Tressilian,' she said, at length, 'why come you here?'

'Nay, why come *you* here, Amy,' returned Tressilian, 'unless it be at length to claim that aid which, as far as one man's heart and arm can extend, shall instantly be rendered to you?'

She was silent a moment, and then answered in a sorrowful rather than an angry tone — 'I require no aid, Tressilian, and would rather be injured than benefited by any which your kindness can offer me. Believe me, I am near one whom law and love oblige to protect me.'

'The villain, then, hath done you the poor justice which remained in his power,' said Tressilian, 'and I behold before me the wife of Varney?'

'The wife of Varney!' she replied, with all the emphasis of scorn. 'With what base name, sir, does your boldness stigmatise the — the — the ——' She hesitated, dropped her tone of scorn, looked down, and was confused and silent, for she recollected what fatal consequences might attend her completing the sentence with 'the Countess of Leicester,' which were the words that had naturally suggested themselves. It would have been a betrayal of the secret, on which her husband had assured her that his fortunes depended, to Tressilian, to Sussex, to the Queen, and to the whole assembled court. 'Never,' she thought, 'will I break my promised silence. I will submit to every suspicion rather than that.'

The tears rose to her eyes as she stood silent before Tressilian, while, looking on her with mingled grief and pity, he said, 'Alas! Amy, your eyes contradict your tongue. That speaks of a protector, willing and able to watch over you, but these tell me you are ruined, and deserted by the wretch to whom you have attached yourself.'

She looked on him, with eyes in which anger sparkled through her tears, but only repeated the word 'wretch' with a scornful emphasis.

'Yes, *wretch!*' said Tressilian, 'for were he aught better, why are you here, and alone in my apartment? Why was not fitting provision made for your honourable reception?'

'In your apartment?' repeated Amy — 'in *your* apartment? It shall instantly be relieved of my presence.' She hastened towards the door, but the sad recollection of her deserted state at once pressed on her mind, and, pausing on the threshold,

she added, in a tone unutterably pathetic, 'Alas! I had forgot, I know not where to go ——'

'I see—I see it all,' said Tressilian, springing to her side, and leading her back to the seat, on which she sunk down. 'You *do* need aid—you *do* need protection, though you will not own it, and you shall not need it long. Leaning on my arm, as the representative of your excellent and broken hearted father, on the very threshold of the castle gate, you shall meet Elizabeth, and the first deed she shall do in the halls of Kenilworth shall be an act of justice to her sex and her subjects. Strong in my good cause and in the Queen's justice, the power of her minion shall not shake my resolution. I will instantly seek Sussex.'

'Not for all that is under heaven!' said the countess, much alarmed, and feeling the absolute necessity of obtaining time, at least, for consideration. 'Tressilian, you were wont to be generous. Grant me one request, and believe, if it be your wish to save me from misery and from madness, you will do more by making me the promise I ask of you than Elizabeth can do for me with all her power!'

'Ask me anything for which you can allege reason,' said Tressilian, 'but demand not of me ——'

'Oh, limit not your boon, dear Edmund!' exclaimed the countess, — 'you once loved that I should call you so, — limit not your boon to reason! for my case is all madness, and frenzy must guide the counsels which alone can aid me.'

'If you speak thus wildly,' said Tressilian, astonishment again overpowering both his grief and his resolution, 'I must believe you indeed incapable of thinking or acting for yourself.'

'Oh no!' she exclaimed, sinking on one knee before him, 'I am not mad. I am but a creature unutterably miserable, and, from circumstances the most singular, dragged on to a precipice by the arm of him who thinks he is keeping me from it — even by yours, Tressilian — by yours, whom I have honoured, respected, all but loved — and yet loved, too — loved, too, Tressilian, though not as you wished to be.'

There was an energy — a self possession — an abandonment in her voice and manner — a total resignation of herself to his generosity, which, together with the kindness of her expressions to himself, moved him deeply. He raised her, and in broken accents entreated her to be comforted.

'I cannot,' she said, 'I will not be comforted till you grant me my request! I will speak as plainly as I dare. I am now

awaiting the commands of one who has a right to issue them. The interference of a third person — of you in especial, Tressilian — will be ruin — utter ruin to me. Wait but four-and-twenty hours, and it may be that the poor Amy may have the means to show that she values, and can reward, your disinterested friendship — that she is happy herself, and has the means to make you so. It is surely worth your patience, for so short a space?’

Tressilian paused, and weighing in his mind the various probabilities which might render a violent interference on his part more prejudicial than advantageous, both to the happiness and reputation of Amy, considering also that she was within the walls of Kenilworth, and could suffer no injury in a castle honoured with the Queen’s residence, and filled with her guards and attendants, he conceived, upon the whole, that he might render her more evil than good service by intruding upon her his appeal to Elizabeth in her behalf. He expressed his resolution cautiously, however, doubting naturally whether Amy’s hopes of extricating herself from her difficulties rested on anything stronger than a blinded attachment to Varney, whom he supposed to be her seducer.

‘Amy,’ he said, while he fixed his sad and expressive eyes on hers, which, in her ecstasy of doubt, terror, and perplexity, she cast up towards him, ‘I have ever remarked that, when others called thee girlish and wilful, there lay under that external semblance of youthful and self-willed folly deep feeling and strong sense. In this I will confide, trusting your own fate in your own hands for the space of twenty-four hours, without my interference by word or act.’

‘Do you promise me this, Tressilian?’ said the countess. ‘Is it possible you can yet repose so much confidence in me? Do you promise, as you are a gentleman and a man of honour, to intrude in my matters, neither by speech nor action, whatever you may see or hear that seems to you to demand your interference? Will you so far trust me?’

‘I will, upon my honour,’ said Tressilian, ‘but when that space is expired —’

‘When that space is expired,’ she said, interrupting him, ‘you are free to act as your judgment shall determine.’

‘Is there nought besides which I can do for you, Amy?’ said Tressilian.

‘Nothing,’ said she, ‘save to leave me, that is, if — I blush to acknowledge my helplessness by asking it — if you can

spare me the use of this apartment for the next twenty four hours'

'This is most wonderful'' said Tressilian, 'what hope or interest can you have in a castle where you cannot command even an apartment?'

'Argue not, but leave me,' she said, and added, as he slowly and unwillingly retired, 'Generous Edmund! the time may come when Amy may show she deserved thy noble attachment.'

CHAPTER XXVIII

What, man, ne'er lack a draught, when the full can
Stands at thine elbow, and craves emptying !
Nay, fear not me, for I have no delight
To watch men's vices, since I have myself
Of virtue nought to boast of I'm a striker,
Would have the world strike with me, pell-mell, all

Pandamonium

TRESSILIAN, in strange agitation of mind, had hardly stepped down the first two or three steps of the winding staircase, when, greatly to his surprise and displeasure, he met Michael Lambourne, wearing an impudent familiarity of visage, for which Tressilian felt much disposed to throw him downstairs, until he remembered the prejudice which Amy, the only object of his solicitude, was likely to receive from his engaging in any act of violence at that time and in that place

He, therefore, contented himself with looking sternly upon Lambourne, as upon one whom he deemed unworthy of notice, and attempted to pass him in his way downstairs without any symptom of recognition. But Lambourne, who, amidst the profusion of that day's hospitality, had not failed to take a deep, though not an overpowering, cup of sack, was not in the humour of humbling himself before any man's looks. He stopped Tressilian upon the staircase without the least bashfulness or embarrassment, and addressed him as if he had been on kind and intimate terms — 'What, no grudge between us, I hope, upon old scores, Master Tressilian? Nay, I am one who remember former kindness rather than later feud. I'll convince you that I meant honestly and kindly, ay, and comfortably, by you.'

'I desire none of your intimacy,' said Tressilian, 'keep company with your mates'

'Now, see how hasty he is!' said Lambourne; 'and how these gentles, that are made questionless out of the porcelain

clay of the earth, look down upon poor Michael Lambourne! You would take Master Tressilian now for the most maid-like, modest, simpering squire of dames that ever made love when candles were long i' the stuff — snuff — call you it? Why, you would play the saint on us, Master Tressilian, and forget that even now thou hast a commodity in thy very bedchamber, to the shame of my lord's castle — ha! ha! ha! Have I touched you, Master Tressilian?

'I know not what you mean,' said Tressilian, inferring, however, too surely that this licentious ruffian must have been sensible of Amy's presence in his apartment, 'but if,' he continued, 'thou art varlet of the chambers, and lackest a fee, there is one to leave mine unmolested.'

Lambourne looked at the piece of gold, and put it in his pocket, saying, 'Now, I know not but you might have done more with me by a kind word than by this chiming rogue. But after all, he pays well that pays with gold, and Mike Lambourne was never a make bate, or a spoil sport, or the like. E'en live and let others live, that is my motto, only, I would not let some folks cock their beaver at me neither, as if they were made of silver ore and I of Dutch pewter. So, if I keep your secret, Master Tressilian, you may look sweet on me at least, and were I to want a little backing or countenance, being caught, as you see the best of us may be, in a sort of peccadillo — why, you owe it me, and so e'en make your chamber serve you and that same bird in bower beside — it's all one to Mike Lambourne.'

'Make way, sir,' said Tressilian, unable to bridle his indignation, 'you have had your fee.'

'Um!' said Lambourne, giving place, however, while he sulkily muttered between his teeth, repeating Tressilian's words — "Make way" — and "you have had your fee", but it matters not. I will spoil no sport, as I said before, I am no dog in the manger, mind that.'

He spoke louder and louder, as Tressilian, by whom he felt himself overawed, got farther and farther out of hearing.

'I am no dog in the manger, but I will not carry coals neither, mind that, my Master Tressilian, and I will have a peep at this wench, whom you have quartered so commodiously in your old haunted room, afraid of ghosts, belike, and not too willing to sleep alone. If I had done this now in a strange lord's castle, the word had been — "The porter's lodge for the knave!" and "Have him flogged, trundle him down-

stairs like a turnip!" Ay, but your virtuous gentlemen take strange privileges over us, who are downright servants of our senses. Well, I have my Master Thessilian's head under my belt by this lucky discovery, that is one thing certain; and I will try to get a sight of this Landabrides of his, that is another.

CHAPTER XXIX

Now fare thee well my master, if true service
Be guerdou'd with hard looks, e'en cut the tow line,
And let our barks across the pathless flood
Hold different courses.

Shipwreck

TRESSILLIAN walked into the outer yard of the castle, scarce knowing what to think of his late strange and most unexpected interview with Amy Robsart, and dubious if he had done well, being entrusted with the delegated authority of her father, to pass his word so solemnly to leave her to her own guidance for so many hours. Yet how could he have denied her request, dependent as she had too probably rendered herself upon Varney? Such was his natural reasoning. The happiness of her future life might depend upon his not driving her to extremities, and since no authority of Tressilian's could extricate her from the power of Varney, supposing he was to acknowledge Amy to be his wife, what title had he to destroy the hope of domestic peace which might yet remain to her by setting enmity betwixt them? Tressilian resolved, therefore, scrupulously to observe his word pledged to Amy, both because it had been given, and because, as he still thought, while he considered and reconsidered that extraordinary interview, it could not with justice or propriety have been refused.

In one respect he had gained much towards securing effectual protection for this unhappy and still beloved object of his early affection. Amy was no longer mewed up in a distant and solitary retreat, under the charge of persons of doubtful reputation. She was in the Castle of Kenilworth, within the verge of the royal court for the time, free from all risk of violence, and liable to be produced before Elizabeth on the first summons. These were circumstances which could not but assist greatly the efforts which he might have occasion to use in her behalf.

While he was thus balancing the advantages and perils which attended her unexpected presence in Kenilworth, Tressilian was hastily and anxiously accosted by Wayland, who, after ejaculating, 'Thank God, your worship is found at last!' proceeded with breathless caution to pour into his ear the intelligence that the lady had escaped from Cumnor Place.

'And is at present in this castle,' said Tressilian, 'I know it, and I have seen her. Was it by her own choice she found refuge in my apartment?'

'No,' answered Wayland, 'but I could think of no other way of safely bestowing her, and was but too happy to find a deputy-usher who knew where you were quartered—in jolly society truly, the hall on the one hand and the kitchen on the other!'

'Peace, this is no time for jesting,' answered Tressilian, sternly.

'I wot that but too well,' said the artist, 'for I have felt these three days as if I had a halter round my neck. This lady knows not her own mind, she will have none of your aid—commands you not to be named to her—and is about to put herself into the hands of my Lord Leicester. I had never got her safe into your chamber, had she known the owner of it.'

'Is it possible?' said Tressilian. 'But she may have hopes the earl will exert his influence in her favour over his villanous dependant.'

'I know nothing of that,' said Wayland, 'but I believe, if she is to reconcile herself with either Leicester or Varney, the side of the Castle of Kenilworth which will be safest for us will be the outside, from which we can fastest fly away. It is not my purpose to abide an instant after delivery of the letter to Leicester, which waits but your commands to find its way to him. See, here it is, but no—a plague on it—I must have left it in my dog-hole, in the hayloft yonder, where I am to sleep.'

'Death and fury!' said Tressilian, transported beyond his usual patience, 'thou hast not lost that on which may depend a stake more important than a thousand such lives as thine?'

'Lost it!' answered Wayland, readily, 'that were a jest indeed! No, sir, I have it carefully put up with my night-sack, and some matters I have occasion to use. I will fetch it in an instant.'

'Do so,' said Tressilian, 'be faithful, and thou shalt be well

rewarded. But if I have reason to suspect thee, a dead dog were in better case than thou !'

Wayland bowed, and took his leave with seeming confidence and alacrity, but, in fact, filled with the utmost dread and confusion. 'The letter was lost, that was certain, notwithstanding the apology which he had made to appease the impatient displeasure of Tressilian. It was lost, it might fall into wrong hands, it would then, certainly, occasion a discovery of the whole intrigue in which he had been engaged, nor, indeed, did Wayland see much prospect of its remaining concealed in any event. He felt much hurt, besides, at Tressilian's burst of impatience.

'Nay, if I am to be paid in this coin for services where my neck is concerned, it is time I should look to myself. Here have I offended, for aught I know, to the death the lord of this stately castle, whose word were as powerful to take away my life as the breath which speaks it to blow out a farthing candle. And all this for a mad lady and a melancholy gallant, who, on the loss of a four nooked bit of paper, has his hand on his poignado, and swears death and fury! Then there is the doctor and Varney — I will save myself from the whole mess of them. Life is dearer than gold. I will fly this instant, though I leave my reward behind me.'

These reflections naturally enough occurred to a mind like Wayland's, who found himself engaged far deeper than he had expected in a train of mysterious and unintelligible intrigues, in which the actors seemed hardly to know their own course. And yet, to do him justice, his personal fears were, in some degree, counterbalanced by his compassion for the deserted state of the lady.

'I care not a groat for Master Tressilian,' he said, 'I have done more than bargain by him, and I have brought his errand-damozel within his reach, so that he may look after her himself, but I fear the poor thing is in much danger amongst these stormy spirits. I will to her chamber, and tell her the fate which has befallen her letter, that she may write another if she list. She cannot lack a messenger, I trow, where there are so many lackeys that can carry a letter to their lord. And I will tell her also that I leave the castle, trusting her to God, her own guidance, and Master Tressilian's care and looking after. Perhaps she may remember the ring she offered me, it was well earned, I trow. But she is a lovely creature, and — marry hang the ring! I will not bear a base spirit for the

matter If I fare ill in this world for my good-nature, I shall have better chance in the next So now for the lady, and then for the road.'

With the stealthy step and jealous eye of the cat that steals on her prey, Wayland resumed the way to the countess's chamber, sliding along by the side of the courts and passages, alike observant of all around him and studious himself to escape observation In this manner he crossed the outward and inward castle-yard, and the great arched passage, which, running betwixt the range of kitchen offices and the hall, led to the bottom of the little winding stair that gave access to the chambers of Mervyn's Tower

The artist congratulated himself on having escaped the various perils of his journey, and was in the act of ascending by two steps at once, when he observed that the shadow of a man, thrown from a door which stood ajar, darkened the opposite wall of the staircase Wayland drew back cautiously, went down to the inner courtyard, spent about a quarter of an hour, which seemed at least quadruple its usual duration, in walking from place to place, and then returned to the tower, in hopes to find that the lurker had disappeared He ascended as high as the suspicious spot — there was no shadow on the wall, he ascended a few yards farther — the door was still ajar, and he was doubtful whether to advance or retreat, when it was suddenly thrown wide open, and Michael Lambourne bolted out upon the astonished Wayland 'Who the devil art thou? and what seek'st thou in this part of the castle? March into that chamber, and be hanged to thee!'

'I am no dog, to go at every man's whistle,' said the artist, affecting a confidence which was belied by a timid shake in his voice

'Say'st thou me so? Come hither, Laurence Staples'

A huge, ill-made and ill-looking fellow, upwards of six feet high, appeared at the door, and Lambourne proceeded 'If thou be'st so fond of this tower, my friend, thou shalt see its foundations, good twelve feet below the bed of the lake, and tenanted by certain jolly toads, snakes, and so forth, which thou wilt find mighty good company Therefore, once more I ask you in fair play who thou art, and what thou seek'st here?'

'If the dungeon-grate once clashes behind me,' thought Wayland, 'I am a gone man.' He therefore answered submissively, 'He was the poor juggler whom his honour had met yesterday in Weatherly Bottom'

'And what juggling trick art thou playing in this tower? Thy gang,' said Lambourne, 'he over against Clinton's Buildings'

'I came here to see my sister,' said the juggler, 'who is in Master Tressilian's chamber, just above'

'Aha!' said Lambourne, smiling, 'here be truths! Upon my honour, for a stranger, this same Master Tressilian makes himself at home among us, and furnishes out his cell handsomely with all sorts of commodities. This will be a precious tale of the sainted Master Tressilian, and will be welcome to some folks, as a purse of broad pieces to me. Hark ye, fellow,' he continued, addressing Wayland, 'thou shalt not give puss a hint to steal away we must catch her in her form. So, back with that pitiful sheep biting visage of thine, or I will fling thee from the window of the tower, and try if thy juggling skill can save thy bones'

'Your worship will not be so hard hearted, I hope,' said Wayland, 'poor folk must live. I trust your honour will allow me to speak with my sister?'

'Sister on Adam's side, I warrant,' said Lambourne, 'or, if otherwise, the more knave thou. But sister or no sister, thou diest on point of fox, if thou comest a-prying to this tower once more. And now I think of it — uds daggers and death! — I will see thee out of the castle, for this is a more main concern than thy jugglery'

'But, please your worship,' said Wayland, 'I am to enact Arion in the pageant upon the lake this very evening'

'I will act it myself, by St. Christopher!' said Lambourne. 'Orion, call'st thou him? I will act Orion, his belt and his seven stars to boot. Come along, for a rascal knave as thou art, follow me! Or stay, Laurence, do thou bring him along'

Laurence seized by the collar of the cloak the unresisting juggler, while Lambourne, with hasty steps, led the way to that same sally-port, or secret postern, by which Tressilian had returned to the castle, and which opened in the western wall, at no great distance from Mervyn's Tower

While traversing with a rapid foot the space betwixt the tower and the sally-port, Wayland in vain racked his brain for some device which might avail the poor lady, for whom, notwithstanding his own imminent danger, he felt deep interest. But when he was thrust out of the castle, and informed by Lambourne, with a tremendous oath, that instant death would

be the consequence of his again approaching it, he cast up his hands and eyes to heaven, as if to call God to witness he had stood to the uttermost in defence of the oppressed, then turned his back on the proud towers of Kenilworth, and went his way to seek a humbler and safer place of refuge.

Laurence and Lambourne gazed a little while after Wayland, and then turned to go back to their tower, when the former thus addressed his companion 'Never credit me, Master Lambourne, if I can guess why thou hast driven this poor caitiff from the castle, just when he was to bear a part in the show that was beginning, and all this about a wench'

'Ah, Laurence,' replied Lambourne, 'thou art thinking of Black Joan Jugges of Shingdon, and hast sympathy with human frailty. But corragio, most noble Duke of the Dungeon and Lord of Limbo, for thou art as dark in this matter as thine own dominions of Little Ease. My most reverend Signior of the Low Countries of Kenilworth, know that our most notable master, Richard Varney, would give as much to have a hole in this same Tressilian's coat as would make us some fifty midnight carousals, with the full leave of bidding the steward go snick up, if he came to startle us too soon from our goblets'

'Nay, an that be the case, thou hast right,' said Laurence Staples, the upper-warder, or, in common phrase, the first jailor of Kenilworth Castle and of the liberty and honour belonging thereto, 'but how will you manage when you are absent at the Queen's entrance, Master Lambourne, for methinks thou must attend thy master there?'

'Why, thou, mine honest prince of prisons, must keep ward in my absence. Let Tressilian enter if he will, but see thou let no one come out. If the damsel herself would make a break, as 't is not unlike she may, scare her back with rough words, she is but a paltry player's wench after all.'

'Nay, for that matter,' said Laurence, 'I might shut the iron wicket upon her, that stands without the double door, and so force per force she will be bound to her answer without more trouble'

'Then Tressilian will not get access to her,' said Lambourne, reflecting a moment. 'But 't is no matter, she will be detected in his chamber, and that is all one. But confess, thou old bat's-eyed dungeon-keeper, that you fear to keep awake by yourself in that Mervyn's Tower of thine?'

'Why, as to fear, Master Lambourne,' said the fellow, 'I mind it not the turning of a key, but strange things have been

the north-west, with some sprinkling of rain, and now and then a growl of thunder. Body o' me, what crackings and clashings, what groanings and what howlings, will there be at such times in Meivyn's Bower, right as it were over our heads, till the matter of two quarts of distilled waters has not been enough to keep my lads and me in some heart !'

'Pshaw, man !' replied Lambourne, on whom his last draught, joined to repeated visitations of the pitcher upon former occasions, began to make some innovation, 'thou speak'st thou know'st not what about spirits. No one knows justly what to say about them, and, in short, least said may in that matter be soonest amended. Some men believe in one thing, some in another. It is all matter of fancy. I have known them of all sorts, my dear Laurence Lock-the-Door, and sensible men too. There's a great lord — we'll pass his name, Laurence — he believes in the stars and the moon, the planets and their courses, and so forth, and that they twinkle exclusively for his benefit; when, in sober, or rather in drunken, truth, Laurence, they are only shining to keep honest fellows like me out of the kennel. Well, sir, let his humour pass, he is great enough to indulge it. Then look ye, there is another — a very learned man, I promise you, and can vent Greek and Hebrew as fast as I can thieves' Latin — he has a humour of sympathies and antipathies, of changing lead into gold, and the like, why *via*, let that pass too, and let him pay those in transmigrated coin who are fools enough to let it be current with them. Then here comest thou thyself, another great man, though neither learned nor noble, yet full six feet high, and thou, like a purblind mole, must needs believe in ghosts and goblins, and such-like. Now, there is, besides, a great man — that is, a great little man, or a little great man, my dear Laurence — and his name begins with V, and what believes he? Why, nothing, honest Laurence — nothing in earth, heaven, or hell, and for my part, if I believe there is a devil, it is only because I think there must be some one to catch our aforesaid friend by the back "when soul and body sever," as the ballad says, for your antecedent will have a consequent — *raro antecedentem*, as Doctor Bircham was wont to say. But this is Greek to you now, honest Laurence, and in sooth learning is dry work. Hand me the pitcher once more.'

'In faith, if you drink more, Michael,' said the warder, 'you will be in sorry case either to play Arion or to wait on your master on such a solemn night, and I expect each moment to

hear the great bell toll for the muster at Mortimer's Tower to receive the Queen.'

While Staples remonstrated, Lambourne drank, and then setting down the pitcher, which was nearly emptied, with a deep sigh, he said in an undertone, which soon rose to a high one as his speech proceeded, 'Never mind, Laurence, if I be drunk, I know that shall make Varney uphold me sober. But, as I said, never mind, I can carry my drink discreetly. Moreover, I am to go on the water as Orion, and shall take cold unless I take something comfortable beforehand. Not play Orion! Let us see the best roarer that ever strained his lungs for twelve pence out-mouth me! What if they see me a little disguised? Wherefore should any man be sober to night? answer me that. It is matter of loyalty to be merry, and I tell thee, there are those in the castle who, if they are not merry when drunk, have little chance to be merry when sober. I name no names, Laurence. But your pottle of sack is a fine shoeing-horn to pull on a loyal humour and a merry one. Huzza for Queen Elizabeth! — for the noble Leicester! — for the worshipful Master Varney! — and for Michael Lambourne, that can turn them all round his finger!'

So saying, he walked downstairs, and across the inner court. The warder looked after him, shook his head, and, while he drew close and locked a wicket, which, crossing the staircase, rendered it impossible for any one to ascend higher than the story immediately beneath Mervyn's Bower, as Tressilian's chamber was named, he thus soliloquised with herself — 'It's a good thing to be a favourite. I wellnigh lost mine office because, one frosty morning, Master Varney thought I smelled of aquavita, and this fellow can appear before him drunk as a wine skin, and yet meet no rebuke. But then he is a pestilent clever fellow withal, and no one can understand above one half of what he says.'

CHAPTER XXX

Now bid the steeple rock, she comes — she comes !
Speak for us, bells — speak for us, shrill-tongued tuckets.
Stand to thy lustock, gunner, let thy cannon
Play such a peal, as if a paynim foe
Came stretch'd in turban'd ranks to storm the ramparts
We will have pageants too, but that craves wit,
And I'm a rough-hewn soldier

The Virgin Queen, a Tragi-Comedy

TRESSILIAN, when Wayland had left him, as mentioned in the last chapter, remained uncertain what he ought next to do, when Raleigh and Blount came up to him arm in arm, yet, according to their wont, very eagerly disputing together. Tressilian had no great desire for their society in the present state of his feelings, but there was no possibility of avoiding them, and indeed he felt that, bound by his promise not to approach Amy, or take any step in her behalf, it would be his best course at once to mix with general society, and to exhibit on his brow as little as he could of the anguish and uncertainty which sat heavy at his heart. He therefore made a virtue of necessity, and hailed his comrades with, 'All mirth to you, gentlemen. Whence come ye?'

'From Warwick, to be sure,' said Blount, 'we must needs home to change our habits, like poor players, who are fain to multiply their persons to outward appearance by change of suits, and you had better do the like, Tressilian.'

'Blount is right,' said Raleigh, 'the Queen loves such marks of deference, and notices, as wanting in respect, those who, not arriving in her immediate attendance, may appear in their soiled and ruffled riding-dress. But look at Blount himself, Tressilian, for the love of laughter, and see how his villanous tailor hath apparelled him — in blue, green, and crimson, with carnation ribbons, and yellow roses in his shoes!'

'Why, what wouldst thou have?' said Blount. 'I told

the cross-legged thief to do his best, and spare no cost, and methinks these things are gay enough — gayer than thine own I'll be judged by Tressilian.

'I agree — I agree,' said Walter Raleigh. 'Judge betwixt us, Tressilian, for the love of Heaven!'

Tressilian, thus appealed to, looked at them both, and was immediately sensible at a single glance that honest Blount had taken upon the tailor's warrant the pied garments which he had chosen to make, and was as much embarrassed by the quantity of points and ribbons which garnished his dress as a clown is in his holiday clothes, while the dress of Raleigh was a well-fancied and rich suit, which the wearer bore as a garb too well adapted to his elegant person to attract particular attention. Tressilian said, therefore, 'That Blount's dress was finest, but Raleigh's the best fancied.'

Blount was satisfied with his decision. 'I knew mine was finest,' he said, 'if that knave Doublestitch had brought me home such a simple doublet as that of Raleigh's, I would have beat his brains out with his own pressing iron. Nay, if we must be fools, ever let us be fools of the first head, say I.'

'But why gettest thou not on thy braveries, Tressilian?' said Raleigh.

'I am excluded from my apartment by a silly mistake,' said Tressilian, 'and separated for the time from my baggage. I was about to seek thee, to beseech a share of thy lodging.'

'And welcome,' said Raleigh, 'it is a noble one. My Lord of Leicester has done us that kindness, and lodged us in princely fashion. If his courtesy be extorted reluctantly, it is at least extended far. I would advise you to tell your strait to the earl's chamberlain — you will have instant redress.'

'Nay, it is not worth while, since you can spare me room,' replied Tressilian. 'I would not be troublesome. Has any one come hither with you?'

'Oh, ay,' said Blount, 'Varney, and a whole tribe of Leicestersians, besides about a score of us honest Sussex folk. We are all, it seems, to receive the Queen at what they call the Gallery Tower, and witness some fooleries there, and then we're to remain in attendance upon the Queen in the great hall — God bless the mark! — while those who are now waiting upon her Grace get rid of their slough, and doff their riding-suits. Heaven help me, if her Grace should speak to me, I shall never know what to answer!'

'And what has detained them so long at Warwick?' said

Tressilian, unwilling that their conversation should return to his own affairs.

'Such a succession of fooleries,' said Blount, 'as were never seen at Bartholomew Fair. We have had speeches and players, and dogs and bears, and men making monkeys, and women moppets, of themselves. I marvel the Queen could endure it. But ever and anon came in something of "the lovely light of her gracious countenance," or some such trash. Ah! vanity makes a fool of the wisest. But, come, let us on to this same Gallery Tower, though I see not what thou, Tressilian, canst do with thy riding-dress and boots.'

'I will take my station behind thee, Blount,' said Tressilian, who saw that his friend's unusual finery had taken a strong hold of his imagination, 'thy goodly size and gay dress will cover my defects.'

'And so thou shalt, Edmund,' said Blount. 'In faith, I am glad thou think'st my garb well-fancied, for all Mr Wittypate here, for when one does a foolish thing, it is right to do it handsomely.'

So saying, Blount cocked his beaver, threw out his leg, and marched manfully forward, as if at the head of his brigade of pikemen, ever and anon looking with complaisance on his crimson stockings, and the huge yellow roses which blossomed on his shoes. Tressilian followed, wrapt in his own sad thoughts, and scarce minding Raleigh, whose quick fancy, amused by the awkward vanity of his respectable friend, vented itself in jests, which he whispered into Tressilian's ear.

In this manner they crossed the long bridge, or tilt-yard, and took their station, with other gentlemen of quality, before the outer gate of the gallery, or entrance-tower. The whole amounted to about forty persons, all selected as of the first rank under that of knighthood, and were disposed in double rows on either side of the gate, like a guard of honour, within the close hedge of pikes and partizans, which was formed by Leicester's retainers, wearing his liveries. The gentlemen carried no arms save their swords and daggers. These gallants were as gaily dressed as imagination could devise, and as the garb of the time permitted a great display of expensive magnificence, nought was to be seen but velvet and cloth of gold and silver, ribbons, feathers, gems, and golden chains. In spite of his more serious subjects of distress, Tressilian could not help feeling that he, with his riding-suit, however handsome it might be, made rather an unworthy figure among

these 'fierce vanities,' and the rather because he saw that his dishabille was the subject of wonder among his own friends and of scorn among the partizans of Leicester

We could not suppress this fact, though it may seem something at variance with the gravity of Tressilian's character, but the truth is, that a regard for personal appearance is a species of self-love from which the wisest are not exempt, and to which the mind clings so instinctively, that not only the soldier advancing to almost inevitable death, but even the doomed criminal who goes to certain execution, shows an anxiety to array his person to the best advantage. But this is a digression.

It was the twilight of a summer night (9th July 1575), the sun having for some time set, and all were in anxious expectation of the Queen's immediate approach. The multitude had remained assembled for many hours, and their numbers were still rather on the increase. A profuse distribution of refreshments, together with roasted oxen, and barrels of ale set a broach in different places of the road, had kept the populace in perfect love and loyalty towards the Queen and her favourite, which might have somewhat abated had fasting been added to watching. They passed away the time, therefore, with the usual popular amusements of whooping, hallooing, shrieking, and playing rude tricks upon each other, forming the chorus of discordant sounds usual on such occasions. These prevailed all through the crowded roads and fields, and especially beyond the gate of the chase, where the greater number of the common sort were stationed, when, all of a sudden, a single rocket was seen to shoot into the atmosphere, and, at the instant, far heard over flood and field, the great bell of the castle tolled.

Immediately there was a pause of dead silence, succeeded by a deep hum of expectation, the united voice of many thousands, none of whom spoke above their breath, or, to use a singular expression, the whisper of an immense multitude.

'They come now, for certain,' said Raleigh. 'Tressilian, that sound is grand. We hear it from this distance, as mariners, after a long voyage, hear, upon their night watch, the tide rush upon some distant and unknown shore.'

'Mass!' answered Blount, 'I hear it rather as I used to hear mine own kine lowing from the close of Wittens Westlowe.'

'He will assuredly graze presently,' said Raleigh to Tressilian 'his thought is all of fat oxen and fertile meadows,

he grows little better than one of his own beeves, and only becomes grand when he is provoked to pushing and goring'

'We shall have him at that presently,' said Tressilian, 'if you spare not your wit'

'Tush, I care not,' answered Raleigh, 'but thou too, Tressilian, hast turned a kind of owl, that flies only by night, hast exchanged thy songs for schreechings, and good company for an ivy-tod'

'But what manner of animal art thou thyself, Raleigh,' said Tressilian, 'that thou holdest us all so lightly?'

'Who, I?' replied Raleigh 'An eagle am I, that never will think of dull earth while there is a heaven to soar in and a sun to gaze upon.'

'Well bragged, by St. Barnaby!' said Blount, 'but, good Master Eagle, beware the cage, and beware the fowler. Many birds have flown as high, that I have seen stuffed with straw, and hung up to scare kites. But hark, what a dead silence hath fallen on them at once!'

'The procession pauses,' said Raleigh, 'at the gate of the chase, where a sibyl, one of the *Fatidicæ*, meets the Queen, to tell her fortune. I saw the verses, there is little savour in them, and her Grace has been already crammed full with such poetical compliments. She whispered to me during the Recorder's speech yonder, at Ford Mill, as she entered the liberties of Warwick, how she was "*pertæsa barbaræ loquelæ*"'

'The Queen whispered to *him*!' said Blount, in a kind of soliloquy 'Good God, to what will this world come!'

His farther meditations were interrupted by a shout of applause from the multitude, so tremendously vociferous that the country echoed for miles round. The guards, thickly stationed upon the road by which the Queen was to advance, caught up the acclamation, which ran like wildfire to the castle, and announced to all within that Queen Elizabeth had entered the royal chase of Kenilworth. The whole music of the castle sounded at once, and a round of artillery, with a salvo of small arms, was discharged from the battlements, but the noise of drums and trumpets, and even of the cannon themselves, was but faintly heard amidst the roaring and reiterated welcomes of the multitude.

As the noise began to abate, a broad glare of light was seen to appear from the gate of the park, and, broadening and brightening as it came nearer, advanced along the open and fair avenue that led towards the Gallery Tower, which, as we

have already noticed, was lined on either hand by the retainers of the Earl of Leicester. The word was passed along the line, "The Queen! The Queen! Silence, and stand fast!" Onward came the cavalcade, illuminated by two hundred thick waxen torches, in the hands of as many horsemen, which cast a light like that of broad day all around the procession, but especially on the principal group, of which the Queen herself, arrayed in the most splendid manner, and blazing with jewels, formed the central figure. She was mounted on a milk white horse, which she reined with peculiar grace and dignity, and in the whole of her stately and noble carriage you saw the daughter of an hundred kings.

The ladies of the court, who rode beside her Majesty, had taken especial care that their own external appearance should not be more glorious than their rank and the occasion altogether demanded, so that no inferior luminary might appear to approach the orbit of royalty. But their personal charms, and the magnificence by which, under every prudential restraint, they were necessarily distinguished, exhibited them as the very flower of a realm so far famed for splendour and beauty. The magnificence of the courtiers, free from such restraints as prudence imposed on the ladies, was yet more unbounded.

Leicester, who glittered like a golden image with jewels and cloth of gold, rode on her Majesty's right hand, as well in quality of her host as of her master of the horse. The black steed which he mounted had not a single white hair on his body, and was one of the most renowned chargers in Europe, having been purchased by the earl at large expense for this royal occasion. As the noble animal chafed at the slow pace of the procession, and, arching his stately neck, champed on the silver bits which restrained him, the foam flew from his mouth and specked his well-formed limbs, as if with spots of snow. The rider well became the high place which he held, and the proud steed which he bestrode, for no man in England, or perhaps in Europe, was more perfect than Dudley in horsemanship and all other exercises belonging to his quality. He was bare headed, as were all the courtiers in the train, and the red torchlight shone upon his long curled tresses of dark hair, and on his noble features, to the beauty of which even the severest criticism could only object the lordly fault, as it may be termed, of a forehead somewhat too high. On that proud evening, those features wore all the grateful solicitude of a subject to show himself sensible of the high honour which

the Queen was conferring on him, and all the pride and satisfaction which became so glorious a moment. Yet, though neither eye nor feature betrayed aught but feelings which suited the occasion, some of the earl's personal attendants remarked that he was unusually pale, and they expressed to each other then fear that he was taking more fatigue than consisted with his health.

Varney followed close behind his master, as the principal esquire in waiting, and had charge of his lordship's black velvet bonnet, garnished with a clasp of diamonds and surmounted by a white plume. He kept his eye constantly on his master, and, for reasons with which the reader is not unacquainted, was, among Leicester's numerous dependants, the one who was most anxious that his lord's strength and resolution should carry him successfully through a day so agitating. For, although Varney was one of the few — the very few — moral monsters who contrive to lull to sleep the remorse of their own bosoms, and are drugged into moral insensibility by atheism, as men in extreme agony are lulled by opium, yet he knew that in the breast of his patron there was already awakened the fire that is never quenched, and that his lord felt, amid all the pomp and magnificence we have described, the gnawing of the worm that dieth not. Still, however, assured as Lord Leicester stood, by Varney's own intelligence, that his countess laboured under an indisposition which formed an unanswerable apology to the Queen for her not appearing at Kenilworth, there was little danger, his wily retainer thought, that a man so ambitious would betray himself by giving way to any external weakness.

The train, male and female, who attended immediately upon the Queen's person were, of course, of the bravest and the fairest — the highest born nobles and the wisest counsellors of that distinguished reign, to repeat whose names were but to weary the reader. Behind came a long crowd of knights and gentlemen, whose rank and birth, however distinguished, were thrown into shade, as their persons into the rear of a procession whose front was of such august majesty.

Thus marshalled, the cavalcade approached the Gallery Tower, which formed, as we have often observed, the extreme barrier of the castle.

It was now the part of the huge porter to step forward, but the lubbard was so overwhelmed with confusion of spirit — the contents of one immense black-jack of double ale, which he

had just drunk to quicken his memory, having treacherously confused the brain it was intended to clear—that he only groaned piteously, and remained sitting on his stone seat, and the Queen would have passed on without greeting, had not the gigantic warder's secret ally, I'hibertigibbet, who lay perdue behind him, thrust a pin into the rear of the short femoral garment which we elsewhere described.

The porter uttered a sort of yell, which came not amiss into his part, started up with his club, and dealt a sound douse or two on each side of him, and then, like a coach horse pricked by the spur, started off at once into the full career of his address, and, by dint of active prompting on the part of Dickie Sludge, delivered, in sounds of gigantic intonation, a speech which may be thus abridged, the reader being to suppose that the first lines were addressed to the throng who approached the gateway, the conclusion, at the approach of the Queen, upon sight of whom, as struck by some Heavenly vision, the gigantic warder dropped his club, resigned his keys, and gave open way to the goddess of the night and all her magnificent train —

'What stir, what turmoil, have we for the nones!
Stand back, my masters, or beware your bones!
Sirs, I'm a warder, and no man of straw,
My voice keeps order, and my club gives law

Yet soft — nay, stay — what vision have we here?
What dainty darling's this — what peerless peer?
What loveliest face, that loving ranks enfold,
Like brightest diamond chased in purest gold?
Dazzled and blind, mine office I forsake,
My club, my key, my knee, my homage take.
Bright paragon, pass on in joy and bliss, —
Beshrew the gate that opens not wide at such a sight as this!'¹

Elizabeth received most graciously the homage of the Herculean porter, and, bending her head to him in requital, passed through his guarded tower, from the top of which was poured a clamorous blast of warlike music, which was replied to by other bands of minstrelsy placed at different points on the castle walls, and by others again stationed in the chase, while the tones of the one, as they yet vibrated on the echoes, were caught up and answered by new harmony from different quarters.

Amidst these bursts of music, which, as if the work of enchantment, seemed now close at hand, now softened by

¹ See Imitation of Gascolgne. Note 15

distant space, now wailing so low and sweet as if that distance were gradually prolonged until only the last lingering strains could reach the ear, Queen Elizabeth crossed the Gallery Tower, and came upon the long bridge which extended from thence to Mortimer's Tower, and which was already as light as day, so many torches had been fastened to the palisades on either side. Most of the nobles here alighted, and sent their horses to the neighbouring village of Kenilworth, following the Queen on foot, as did the gentlemen who had stood in array to receive her at the Gallery Tower.

On this occasion, as at different times during the evening, Raleigh addressed himself to Tressilian, and was not a little surprised at his vague and unsatisfactory answers, which, joined to his leaving his apartment without any assigned reason, appearing in an undress when it was likely to be offensive to the Queen, and some other symptoms of irregularity which he thought he discovered, led him to doubt whether his friend did not labour under some temporary derangement.

Meanwhile, the Queen had no sooner stepped on the bridge than a new spectacle was provided, for, as soon as the music gave signal that she was so far advanced, a raft, so disposed as to resemble a small floating island, illuminated by a great variety of torches, and surrounded by floating pageants formed to represent sea-horses, on which sat Tritons, Nereids, and other fabulous deities of the seas and rivers, made its appearance upon the lake, and, issuing from behind a small heronry where it had been concealed, floated gently towards the farther end of the bridge.

On the islet appeared a beautiful woman, clad in a watchet-coloured silken mantle, bound with a broad girdle, inscribed with characters like the phylacteries of the Hebrews. Her feet and arms were bare, but her wrists and ankles were adorned with gold bracelets of uncommon size. Amidst her long silky black hair she wore a crown or chaplet of artificial mistletoe, and bore in her hand a rod of ebony tipped with silver. Two nymphs attended on her, dressed in the same antique and mystical guise.

The pageant was so well managed, that this Lady of the Floating Island, having performed her voyage with much picturesque effect, landed at Mortimer's Tower, with her two attendants, just as Elizabeth presented herself before that outwork. The stranger then, in a well-penned speech, announced herself as that famous Lady of the Lake, renowned in the

stories of King Arthur, who had nursed the youth of the redoubted Sir Lancelot, and whose beauty had proved too powerful both for the wisdom and the spells of the mighty Merlin. Since that early period, she had remained possessed of her crystal dominions, she said, despite the various men of fame and might by whom Kenilworth had been successively tenanted. The Saxons, the Danes, the Normans, the Saintlowes, the Clintons, the Montforts, the Mortimers, the Plantagenets, great though they were in arms and magnificence, had never, she said, caused her to raise her head from the waters which hid her crystal palace. But a greater than all these great names had now appeared, and she came in homage and duty to welcome the peerless Elizabeth to all sport which the castle and its environs, which lake or land, could afford.

The Queen received this address also with great courtesy, and made answer in rally, 'We thought this lake had belonged to our own dominions, fair dame, but since so famed a lady claims it for hers, we will be glad at some other time to have further communing with you touching our joint interests.'

With this gracious answer, the Lady of the Lake vanished, and Arion, who was amongst the maritime deities, appeared upon his dolphin. But Lambourne, who had taken upon him the part in the absence of Wayland, being chilled with remaining immersed in an element to which he was not friendly, having never got his speech by heart, and not having, like the porter, the advantage of a prompter, paid it off with impudence, tearing off his vizard, and swearing, 'Cog's bones! he was none of Arion or Orion either, but honest Mike Lambourne, that had been drinking her Majesty's health from morning till midnight, and was come to bid her heartily welcome to Kenilworth Castle.'

This unpremeditated buffoonery answered the purpose probably better than the set speech would have done. The Queen laughed heartily, and swore, in her turn, that he had made the best speech she had heard that day. Lambourne, who instantly saw his jest, had saved his bones, jumped on shore, gave his dolphin a kick, and declared he would never meddle with fish again, except at dinner.

At the same time that the Queen was about to enter the castle, that memorable discharge of fireworks by water and land took place, which Master Laneham, formerly introduced to the reader, has strained all his eloquence to describe.

'Such,' says the clerk of the council chamber door, 'was

the blaze of burning darts, the gleams of stars conuscant, the streams and hail of fiery sparks, lightnings of wildfire, and flight-shot of thunderbolts, with continuance, terror, and vehemency, that the heavens thundered, the waters surged, and the earth shook, and for my part, hardy as I am, it made me very vengeanceably afraid.'¹

¹ See Festivities at Kenilworth Note 16

CHAPTER XXXI

Nay, this is matter for the month of March,
When hares are maddest. Either speak in reason,
Giving cold argument the wall of passion,
Or I break up the court.

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

It is by no means our purpose to detail minutely all the princely festivities of Kenilworth, after the fashion of Master Robert Laneham, whom we quoted in the conclusion of the last chapter. It is sufficient to say that, under charge of the splendid fireworks, which we have borrowed Laneham's eloquence to describe, the Queen entered the base-urt of Kenilworth, through Mortimer's Tower, and moving on rough pageants of heathen gods and heroes of antiquity, who ured gifts and compliments on the bended knee, at length ind her way to the great hall of the castle, gorgeously hung : her reception with the richest silken tapestry, misty with rfumes, and sounding to strains of soft and delicious music. om the highly carved oaken roof hung a superb chandelier of t bronze, formed like a spread eagle, whose outstretched ngs supported three male and three female figures, grasping pair of branches in each hand. The hall was thus illuminated : twenty-four torches of wax. At the upper end of the lendid apartment was a state canopy, overshadowing a royal rone, and beside it was a door, which opened to a long suite apartments, decorated with the utmost magnificence for the een and her ladies, whenever it should be her pleasure to be ivate.

The Earl of Leicester having handed the Queen up to her rone and seated her there, knelt down before her, and kissing the hand which she held out, with an air in which romantic and respectful gallantry was happily mingled with the air of yal devotion, he thanked her, in terms of the deepest gratitude, for the highest honour which a sovereign could render to subject. So handsome did he look when kneeling before her,

that Elizabeth was tempted to prolong the scene a little longer than there was, strictly speaking, necessity for, and ere she raised him, she passed her hand over his head, so near as almost to touch his long curled and perfumed hair, and with a movement of fondness, that seemed to intimate she would, if she dared, have made the motion a slight caress.¹

She at length raised him, and, standing beside the throne, he explained to her the various preparations which had been made for her amusement and accommodation, all of which received her prompt and gracious approbation. The earl then prayed her Majesty for permission that he himself, and the nobles who had been in attendance upon her during the journey, might retire for a few minutes, and put themselves into a guise more fitting for dutiful attendance, during which space, those gentlemen of worship (pointing to Varney, Blount, Tressilian, and others), who had already put themselves into fresh attire, would have the honour of keeping her presence-chamber.

'Be it so, my lord,' answered the Queen, 'you could manage a theatre well, who can thus command a double set of actors. For ourselves, we will receive your courtesies this evening but clownishly, since it is not our purpose to change our riding attire, being in effect something fatigued with a journey which the concourse of our good people hath rendered slow, though the love they have shown our person hath, at the same time, made it delightful.'

Leicester, having received this permission, retired accordingly, and was followed by those nobles who had attended the Queen to Kenilworth in person. The gentlemen who had preceded them, and were of course dressed for the solemnity, remained in attendance. But being most of them of rather inferior rank, they remained at an awful distance from the throne which Elizabeth occupied. The Queen's sharp eye soon distinguished Raleigh amongst them, with one or two others who were personally known to her, and she instantly made them a sign to approach, and accosted them very graciously. Raleigh, in particular, the adventure of whose cloak, as well as the incident of the verses, remained on her mind, was very graciously received, and to him she most frequently applied for information concerning the names and rank of those who were in presence. These he communicated concisely, and not without some traits of humorous satire, by which Elizabeth seemed much amused. 'And who is yonder clownish fellow?' she said,

¹ See Elizabeth and Leicester Note 17

looking at Tressilian, whose soiled dress on this occasion greatly obscured his good men.

'A poet, if it please your Grace,' replied Raleigh

'I might have guessed that from his careless garb,' said Elizabeth 'I have known some poets so thoughtless as to throw their cloaks into gutters'

'It must have been when the sun dazzled both their eyes and their judgment,' answered Raleigh.

Elizabeth smiled, and proceeded—'I asked that slovenly fellow's name, and you only told me his profession.'

'Tressilian is his name,' said Raleigh, with internal reluctance, for he foresaw nothing favourable to his friend from the manner in which she took notice of him.

'Tressilian!' answered Elizabeth 'Oh, the Menelaus of our romance. Why, he has dressed himself in a guise that will go far to exculpate his fair and false Helen And where is Farnham, or whatever his name is—my Lord of Leicester's man, I mean—the Paris of this Devonshire tale?'

With still greater reluctance, Raleigh named and pointed out to her Varney, for whom the tailor had done all that art could perform in making his exterior agreeable, and who, if he had not grace, had a sort of tact and habitual knowledge of breeding which came in place of it.

The Queen turned her eyes from the one to the other 'I doubt,' she said, 'this same poetical Master Tressilian, who is too learned, I warrant me, to remember what presence he was to appear in, may be one of those of whom Geoffrey Chaucer says wittily, the wisest clerks are not the wisest men. I remember that Varney is a smooth-tongued varlet. I doubt this fair runaway hath had reasons for breaking her faith.'

To this Raleigh durst make no answer, aware how little he should benefit Tressilian by contradicting the Queen's sentiments, and not at all certain, on the whole, whether the best thing that could befall him would not be that she should put an end at once by her authority to this affair, upon which it seemed to him Tressilian's thoughts were fixed with unavailing and distressing pertinacity As these reflections passed through his active brain, the lower door of the hall opened, and Leicester, accompanied by several of his kinsmen and of the nobles who had embraced his faction, re entered the castle hall.

The favourite earl was now apparelled all in white, his shoes being of white velvet, his understocks, or stockings, of knit silk, his upper stocks of white velvet, lined with cloth

of silver, which was shown at the slashed part of the middle thigh, his doublet of cloth of silver, the close jerkin of white velvet, embroidered with silver and seed-pearl, his girdle and the scabbard of his sword of white velvet with golden buckles, his poniard and sword hilted and mounted with gold, and over all, a rich loose robe of white satin, with a border of golden embroidery a foot in breadth. The collar of the Garter, and the azure Garter itself around his knee, completed the appointments of the Earl of Leicester, which were so well matched by his fair stature, graceful gesture, fine proportion of body, and handsome countenance, that at that moment he was admitted by all who saw him as the goodliest person whom they had ever looked upon. Sussex and the other nobles were also richly attired, but, in point of splendour and gracefulness of mien, Leicester far exceeded them all.

Elizabeth received him with great complacency. 'We have one piece of royal justice,' she said, 'to attend to.' It is a piece of justice, too, which interests us as a woman, as well as in the character of mother and guardian of the English people.'

An involuntary shudder came over Leicester, as he bowed low, expressive of his readiness to receive her royal commands, and a similar cold fit came over Varney, whose eyes (seldom during that evening removed from his patron) instantly perceived, from the change in his looks, slight as that was, of what the Queen was speaking. But Leicester had wrought his resolution up to the point which, in his crooked policy, he judged necessary, and when Elizabeth added — 'It is of the matter of Varney and Tressilian we speak — is the lady here, my lord?' His answer was ready — 'Gracious madam, she is not.'

Elizabeth bent her brows and compressed her lips. 'Our orders were strict and positive, my lord,' was her answer —

'And should have been obeyed, good my liege,' replied Leicester, 'had they been expressed in the form of the lightest wish. But — Varney, step forward — this gentleman will inform your Grace of the cause why the lady (he could not force his rebellious tongue to utter the words 'his wife') cannot attend on your royal presence.'

Varney advanced, and pleaded with readiness, what indeed he firmly believed, the absolute incapacity of the party (for neither did he dare, in Leicester's presence, term her his wife) to wait on her Grace.

'Here,' said he, 'are attestations from a most learned

physician, whose skill and honour are well known to my good Lord of Leicester, and from an honest and devout Protestant, a man of credit and substance, one Anthony Foster, the gentleman in whose house she is at present bestowed, that she now labours under an illness which altogether unfits her for such a journey as betwixt this castle and the neighbourhood of Oxford.'

'This alters the matter,' said the Queen, taking the certificates in her hand, and glancing at their contents. 'Let Tressilian come forward. Master Tressilian, we have much sympathy for your situation, the rather that you seem to have set your heart deeply on this Amy Robsart or Varney. Our power, thanks to God and the willing obedience of a loving people, is worth much, but there are some things which it cannot compass. We cannot, for example, command the affections of a giddy young girl, or make her love sense and learning better than a courtier's fine doublet, and we cannot control sickness, with which it seems this lady is afflicted, who may not, by reason of such infirmity, attend our court here, as we had required her to do. Here are the testimonials of the physician who hath her under his charge, and the gentleman in whose house she resides, so setting forth.'

'Under your Majesty's favour,' said Tressilian hastily, and, in his alarm for the consequence of the imposition practised on the Queen, forgetting, in part at least, his own promise to Amy, 'these certificates speak not the truth.'

'How, sir!' said the Queen. 'Impeach my Lord of Leicester's veracity! But you shall have a fair hearing. In our presence the meanest of our subjects shall be heard against the proudest, and the least known against the most favoured, therefore you shall be heard fairly, but beware you speak not without a warrant! Take these certificates in your own hand, look at them carefully, and say manfully if you impugn the truth of them, and upon what evidence.'

As the Queen spoke, his promise and all its consequences rushed on the mind of the unfortunate Tressilian, and while it controlled his natural inclination to pronounce that a falsehood which he knew from the evidence of his senses to be untrue, gave an indecision and irresolution to his appearance and utterance, which made strongly against him in the mind of Elizabeth, as well as of all who beheld him. He turned the papers over and over, as if he had been an idiot, incapable of comprehending their contents. The Queen's impatience began

to become visible 'You are a scholar, sir,' she said, 'and of some note, as I have heard, yet you seem wondrous slow in reading text-hand. How say you, are these certificates true or no?'

'Madam,' said Tressilian, with obvious embarrassment and hesitation, anxious to avoid admitting evidence which he might afterwards have reason to confute, yet equally desirous to keep his word to Amy, and to give her, as he had promised, space to plead her own cause in her own way — 'madam — madam, your Grace calls on me to admit evidence which ought to be proved valid by those who found their defence upon it.'

'Why, Tressilian, thou art critical as well as poetical,' said the Queen, bending on him a blow of displeasure, 'methinks these writings, being produced in the presence of the noble earl to whom this castle pertains, and his honour being appealed to as the guarantee of their authenticity, might be evidence enough for thee. But since thou lists to be so formal — Varney, or rather my Lord of Leicester, for the affair becomes yours (these words, though spoken at random, thrilled through the earl's marrow and bones), what evidence have you as touching these certificates?'

Varney hastened to reply, preventing Leicester — 'So please your Majesty, my young Lord of Oxford, who is here in presence, knows Master Anthony Foster's hand and his character.'

The Earl of Oxford, a young unthrift, whom Foster had more than once accommodated with loans on usurious interest, acknowledged, on this appeal, that he knew him as a wealthy and independent franklin, supposed to be worth much money, and verified the certificate produced to be his handwriting.

'And who speaks to the doctor's certificate?' said the Queen. 'Alasco, methinks, is his name.'

Masters, her Majesty's physician (not the less willingly that he remembered his repulse from Say's Court, and thought that his present testimony might gratify Leicester, and mortify the Earl of Sussex and his faction), acknowledged he had more than once consulted with Doctor Alasco, and spoke of him as a man of extraordinary learning and hidden acquirements, though not altogether in the regular course of practice. The Earl of Huntingdon, Lord Leicester's brother-in-law, and the old Countess of Rutland, next sang his praises, and both remembered the thin, beautiful Italian hand in which he was wont to write his receipts, and which corresponded to the certificate produced as his.

'And now, I trust, Master Tressilian, this matter is ended,'

said the Queen. 'We will do something ere the night is older to reconcile old Sir Hugh Robsart to the match. You have done your duty something more than boldly, but we were no woman had we not compassion for the wounds which true love deals, so we forgive your audacity, and your uncleansed boots withal, which have wellnigh overpowered my Lord of Leicester's perfumes.'

So spoke Elizabeth, whose nicety of scent was one of the characteristics of her organisation, as appeared long afterwards when she expelled Essex from her presence on a charge against his boots similar to that which she now expressed against those of Tressilian.

But Tressilian had by this time collected himself, astonished as he had at first been by the audacity of the falsehood so feebly supported, and placed in array against the evidence of his own eyes. He rushed forward, kneeled down, and caught the Queen by the skirt of her robe. 'As you are Christian woman,' he said, 'madam, as you are crowned queen, to do equal justice among your subjects—as you hope yourself to have fair hearing—which God grant you—at that last bar at which we must all plead, grant me one small request! Decide not this matter so hastily. Give me but twenty-four hours' interval, and I will, at the end of that brief space, produce evidence which will show to demonstration that these certificates, which state this unhappy lady to be now ill at ease in Oxfordshire, are false as hell!'

'Let go my train, sir!' said Elizabeth, who was startled at his vehemence, though she had too much of lion in her to fear. 'The fellow must be distraught, that witty knave, my godson Harrington, must have him into his rhymes of *Orlando Furioso*! And yet, by this light, there is something strange in the vehemence of his demand. Speak, Tressilian, what wilt thou do if, at the end of these four and-twenty hours, thou canst not confute a fact so solemnly proved as this lady's illness?'

'I will lay down my head on the block,' answered Tressilian. 'Pshaw!' replied the Queen. 'God's light! thou speak'st like a fool. What head falls in England but by just sentence of English law? I ask thee, man—if thou hast sense to understand me—wilt thou, if thou shalt fail in this improbable attempt of thine, render me a good and sufficient reason why thou dost undertake it?'

Tressilian paused, and again hesitated, because he felt convinced that if, within the interval demanded, Amy should become

reconciled to her husband, he would in that case do her the worst of offices by again ripping up the whole circumstances before Elizabeth, and showing how that wise and jealous princess had been imposed upon by false testimonials. The consciousness of this dilemma renewed his extreme embarrassment of look, voice, and manner, he hesitated, looked down, and on the Queen repeating her question with a stern voice and flashing eye, he admitted with faltering words, 'That it might be — he could not positively — that is, in certain events — explain the reasons and grounds on which he acted.'

'Now, by the soul of King Henry,' said the Queen, 'this is either moonstruck madness or very knavery! Seest thou, Raleigh, thy friend is far too Pindaric for this presence. Have him away, and make us quit of him, or it shall be the worse for him, for his flights are too unbridled for any place but Parnassus or St Luke's Hospital. But come back instantly thyself, when he is placed under fitting restraint. We wish we had seen the beauty which could make such havoc in a wise man's brain.'

Tressilian was again endeavouring to address the Queen, when Raleigh, in obedience to the order she had received, interfered, and, with Blount's assistance, half-led, half-forced him out of the presence-chamber, where he himself indeed began to think his appearance did his cause more harm than good.

When they had attained the ante-chamber, Raleigh entreated Blount to see Tressilian safely conducted into the apartments allotted to the Earl of Sussex's followers, and, if necessary, recommended that a guard should be mounted on him.

'This extravagant passion,' he said, 'and, as it would seem, the news of the lady's illness, has utterly wrecked his excellent judgment. But it will pass away if he be kept quiet. Only let him break forth again at no rate, for he is already far in her Highness's displeasure, and should she be again provoked, she will find for him a worse place of confinement and sterner keepers.'

'I judged as much as that he was mad,' said Nicholas Blount, looking down upon his own crimson stockings and yellow roses, 'whenever I saw him wearing yonder damned boots, which stunk so in her nostrils. I will but see him stowed, and be back with you presently. But, Walter, did the Queen ask who I was? Methought she glanced an eye at me.'

'Twenty — twenty eye-glances she sent, and I told her all how thou wert a brave soldier, and a ——— But, for God's sake, get off Tressilian!'

'I will — I will,' said Blount, 'but methinks this court-haunting is no such bad pastime, after all. We shall rise by it, Walter, my brave lad. Thou saidst I was a good soldier, and a —— What besides, dearest Walter?'

'An all unutterable — cod's head. For God's sake, begone!'

Tressilian, without farther resistance or expostulation, followed, or rather suffered himself to be conducted by Blount to Raleigh's lodging, where he was formally installed into a small truckle-bed, placed in a wardrobe and designed for a domestic. He saw but too plainly that no remonstrances would avail to procure the help or sympathy of his friends, until the lapse of the time for which he had pledged himself to remain inactive should enable him either to explain the whole circumstances to them, or remove from him every pretext or desire of farther interference with the fortunes of Amy, by her having found means to place herself in a state of reconciliation with her husband.

With great difficulty, and only by the most patient and mild remonstrances with Blount, he escaped the disgrace and mortification of having two of Sussex's stoutest yeomen quartered in his apartment. At last, however, when Nicholas had seen him fairly deposited in his truckle bed, and had bestowed one or two hearty kicks, and as hearty curses, on the boots, which, in his lately acquired spirit of foppery, he considered as a strong symptom, if not the cause, of his friend's malady, he contented himself with the modified measure of locking the door on the unfortunate Tressilian, whose gallant and disinterested efforts to save a female who had treated him with ingratitude thus terminated, for the present, in the displeasure of his sovereign, and the conviction of his friends that he was little better than a madman.

CHAPTER XXXII

The wisest sovereigns err like private men,
And royal hand has sometimes laid the sword
Of chivalry upon a worthless shoulder,
Which better had been branded by the hangman.
What then? Kings do their best, and they and we
Must answer for the intent, and not the event.

Old Play.

‘IT is a melancholy matter,’ said the Queen, when Tressilian was withdrawn, ‘to see a wise and learned man’s wit thus pitifully unsettled. Yet this public display of his imperfection of brain plainly shows us that his supposed injury and accusation were fruitless, and therefore, my Lord of Leicester, we remember your suit formerly made to us in behalf of your faithful servant Varney, whose good gifts and fidelity, as they are useful to you, ought to have due reward from us, knowing well that your lordship, and all you have, are so earnestly devoted to our service. And we render Varney the honour more especially that we are a guest, and we fear a chargeable and troublesome one, under your lordship’s roof, and also for the satisfaction of the good old knight of Devon, Sir Hugh Robsart, whose daughter he hath married, and we trust the especial mark of grace which we are about to confer may reconcile him to his son-in-law. Your sword, my Lord of Leicester.’

The earl unbuckled his sword, and, taking it by the point, presented on bending knee the hilt to Elizabeth.

She took it slowly, drew it from the scabbard, and while the ladies who stood around turned away their eyes with real or affected shuddering, she noted with a curious eye the high polish and rich damasked ornaments upon the glittering blade.

‘Had I been a man,’ she said, ‘methinks none of my ancestors would have loved a good sword better. As it is with me, I like to look on one, and could, like the fairy of whom I have read in some Italian rhymes — were my godson Harrington

here, he could tell me the passage¹ — even trim my hair and arrange my head gear in such a steel mirror as this is. Richard Varney, come forth and kneel down. In the name of God and St. George, we dub thee knight! Be faithful, brave, and fortunate. Arise, Sir Richard Varney.’

Varney arose and retired, making a deep obeisance to the sovereign who had done him so much honour.

‘The buckling of the spur, and what other rites remain,’ said the Queen, ‘may be finished to-morrow in the chapel, for we intend Sir Richard Varney a companion in his honours. And as we must not be partial in conferring such distinction, we mean on this matter to confer with our cousin of Sussex.’

That noble earl, who, since his arrival at Kenilworth, and indeed since the commencement of this progress, had found himself in a subordinate situation to Leicester, was now wearing a heavy cloud on his brow — a circumstance which had not escaped the Queen, who hoped to appease his discontent, and to follow out her system of balancing policy, by a mark of peculiar favour, the more gratifying as it was tendered at a moment when his rival’s triumph appeared to be complete.

At the summons of Queen Elizabeth, Sussex hastily approached her person, and being asked on which of his followers, being a gentleman and of merit, he would wish the honour of knighthood to be conferred, he answered, with more sincerity than policy, that he would have ventured to speak for Tressilian, to whom he conceived he owed his own life, and who was a distinguished soldier and scholar, besides a man of unstained lineage, ‘only,’ he said, ‘he feared the events of that night —’ and then he stopped.

‘I am glad your lordship is thus considerate,’ said Elizabeth, ‘the events of this night would make us, in the eyes of our subjects, as mad as this poor brain sick gentleman himself — for we ascribe his conduct to no malice — should we choose this moment to do him grace.’

‘In that case,’ said the Earl of Sussex, somewhat discountenanced, ‘your Majesty will allow me to name my master of the horse, Master Nicholas Blount, a gentleman of fair estate and ancient name, who has served your Majesty both in Scotland and Ireland, and brought away bloody marks on his person, all honourably taken and requited.’

The Queen could not help shrugging her shoulders slightly even at this second suggestion, and the Duchess of Rutland,

¹ See Italian Poetry Note 18

who read in the Queen's manner that she had expected Sussex would have named Raleigh, and thus would have enabled her to gratify her own wish while she honoured his recommendation, only waited the Queen's assent to what he had proposed, and then said, that she hoped, since these two high nobles had been each permitted to suggest a candidate for the honours of chivalry, she, in behalf of the ladies in presence, might have a similar indulgence

'I were no woman to refuse you such a boon,' said the Queen, smiling

'Then,' pursued the duchess, 'in the name of these fair ladies present, I request your Majesty to confer the rank of knighthood on Walter Raleigh, whose birth, deeds of arms, and promptitude to serve our sex with sword or pen, deserve such distinction from us all.'

'Gramercy, fair ladies,' said Elizabeth, smiling, 'your boon is granted, and the gentle squire Lack-Cloak shall become the good knight Lack-Cloak at your desire. Let the two aspirants for the honour of chivalry step forward'

Blount was not as yet returned from seeing Tressilian, as he conceived, safely disposed of, but Raleigh came forth, and, kneeling down, received at the hand of the Virgin Queen that title of honour, which was never conferred on a more distinguished or more illustrious object

Shortly afterwards, Nicholas Blount entered, and, hastily apprised by Sussex, who met him at the door of the hall, of the Queen's gracious purpose regarding him, he was desired to advance towards the throne. It is a sight sometimes seen, and it is both ludicrous and pitiable, when an honest man of plain common sense is surprised, by the coquetry of a pretty woman or any other cause, into those frivolous fopperies which only sit well upon the youthful, the gay, and those to whom long practice has rendered them a second nature. Poor Blount was in this situation. His head was already giddy from a consciousness of unusual finery, and the supposed necessity of suiting his manners to the gaiety of his dress, and now this sudden view of promotion altogether completed the conquest of the newly inhaled spirit of foppery over his natural disposition, and converted a plain, honest, awkward man into a coxcomb of a new and most ridiculous kind

The knight-expectant advanced up the hall, the whole length of which he had unfortunately to traverse, turning out his toes with so much zeal that he presented his leg at every step with

its broad side foremost, so that it greatly resembled an old-fashioned table knife with a curved point, when seen sideways. The rest of his gait was in proportion to this unhappy amble, and the implied mixture of bashful fear and self satisfaction was so unutterably ridiculous that Leicester's friends did not suppress a titter, in which many of Sussex's partizans were unable to resist joining, though ready to eat their nails with mortification. Sussex himself lost all patience, and could not forbear whispering into the ear of his friend, 'Curse thee! canst thou not walk like a man and a soldier?' an interjection which only made honest Blount start and stop, until a glance at his yellow roses and crimson stockings restored his self confidence, when on he went at the same pace as before.

The Queen conferred on poor Blount the honour of knight-hood with a marked sense of reluctance. That wise princess was fully aware of the propriety of using great circumspection and economy in bestowing those titles of honour, which the Stewarts, who succeeded to her throne, distributed with an imprudent liberality which greatly diminished their value. Blount had no sooner arisen and retired than she turned to the Dutchess of Rutland. 'Our woman wit,' she said, 'dear Rutland, is sharper than that of those proud things in doublet and hose. Seest thou, out of these three knights, thine is the only true metal to stamp chivalry's imprint upon?'

'Sir Richard Varney, surely the friend of my Lord of Leicester — surely *he* has merit,' replied the duchess.

'Varney has a sly countenance and a smooth tongue,' replied the Queen. 'I fear me, he will prove a knave, but the promise was of ancient standing. My Lord of Sussex must have lost his own wits, I think, to recommend to us first a madman like Tressilian and then a clownish fool like this other fellow. I protest, Rutland, that while he sat on his knees before me mopping and mowing as if he had scalding porridge in his mouth, I had much ado to forbear cutting him over the pate, instead of striking his shoulder.'

'Your Majesty gave him a smart accolade,' said the duchess, 'we who stood behind heard the blade clatter on his collar-bone, and the poor man fidgeted too as if he felt it.'

'I could not help it, wench,' said the Queen, laughing, 'but we will have this same Sir Nicholas sent to Ireland or Scotland, or somewhere, to rid our court of so antic a chevalier, he may be a good soldier in the field, though a preposterous ass in a banqueting hall.'

The discourse became then more general, and soon after there was a summons to the banquet

In order to obey this signal, the company were under the necessity of crossing the inner court of the castle, that they might reach the new buildings, containing the large banquetting-room, in which preparations for supper were made upon a scale of profuse magnificence corresponding to the occasion.

The livery cupboards were loaded with plate of the richest description, and the most varied ; some articles tasteful, some perhaps grotesque, in the invention and decoration, but all gorgeously magnificent, both from the richness of the work and value of the materials. Thus the chief table was adorned by a salt, ship-fashion, made of mother-of-pearl, garnished with silver and divers warlike ensigns, and other ornaments, anchors, sails, and sixteen pieces of ordnance. It bore a figure of Fortune, placed on a globe, with a flag in her hand. Another salt was fashioned of silver, in the form of a swan in full sail. That chivalry might not be omitted amid this splendour, a silver St George was presented, mounted and equipped in the usual fashion in which he bestrides the dragon. The figures were moulded to be in some sort useful. The horse's tail was managed to hold a case of knives, while the breast of the dragon presented a similar accommodation for oyster knives.¹

In the course of the passage from the hall of reception to the banquetting-room, and especially in the courtyard, the new-made knights were assailed by the heralds, pursuivants, minstrels, etc, with the usual cry of '*Largesse — largesse, chevaliers très hardis !*' an ancient invocation, intended to awaken the bounty of the acolytes of chivalry towards those whose business it was to register their armorial bearings, and celebrate the deeds by which they were illustrated. The call was, of course, liberally and courteously answered by those to whom it was addressed. Varney gave his largesse with an affectation of complaisance and humility. Raleigh bestowed his with the graceful ease peculiar to one who has attained his own place, and is familiar with its dignity. Honest Blount gave what his tailor had left him of his half-year's rent, dropping some pieces in his hurry, then stooping down to look for them, and then distributing them amongst the various claimants with the anxious face and mien of the parish beadle dividing a dole among paupers.

These donations were accepted with the usual clamour and

¹ See Furniture of Kenilworth. Note 19

vivats of applause common on such occasions, but, as the parties gratified were chiefly dependants of Lord Leicester, it was Varney whose name was repeated with the loudest acclamations. Lambourne, especially, distinguished himself by his vociferations of 'Long life to Sir Richard Varney! Health and honour to Sir Richard! Never was a more worthy knight dubbed——!' then, suddenly sinking his voice, he added—'since the valiant Sir Pandarus of Troy'—a winding-up of his clamorous applause which set all men a laughing who were within hearing of it.

It is unnecessary to say anything farther of the festivities of the evening, which were so brilliant in themselves, and received with such obvious and willing satisfaction by the Queen, that Leicester retired to his own apartment with all the giddy raptures of successful ambition. Varney, who had changed his splendid attire, and now waited on his patron in a very modest and plain undress, attended to do the honours of the earl's *coucher*.

'How! Sir Richard,' said Leicester, smiling, 'your new rank scarce suits the humility of this attendance.'

'I would disown that rank, my lord,' said Varney, 'could I think it was to remove me to a distance from your lordship's person.'

'Thou art a grateful fellow,' said Leicester, 'but I must not allow you to do what would abate you in the opinion of others.'

While thus speaking, he still accepted, without hesitation, the offices about his person, which the new made knight seemed to render as eagerly as if he had really felt, in discharging the task, that pleasure which his words expressed.

'I am not afraid of men's misconstruction,' he said, in answer to Leicester's remark, 'since there is not—permit me to undo the collar—a man within the castle who does not expect very soon to see persons of a rank far superior to that which, by your goodness, I now hold, rendering the duties of the bed-chamber to you, and accounting it an honour.'

'It might, indeed, so have been,' said the earl, with an involuntary sigh, and then presently added, 'My gown, Varney—I will look out on the night. Is not the moon near to the full?'

'I think so, my lord, according to the calendar,' answered Varney.

There was an abutting window, which opened on a small projecting balcony of stone, battlemented as is usual in Gothic

castles The earl undid the lattice, and stepped out into the open air The station he had chosen commanded an extensive view of the lake and woodlands beyond, where the bright moonlight rested on the clear blue waters and the distant masses of oak and elm trees The moon rode high in the heavens, attended by thousands and thousands of inferior luminaries All seemed already to be hushed in the nether world, excepting occasionally the voice of the watch, for the yeomen of the guard performed that duty wherever the Queen was present in person, and the distant baying of the hounds, disturbed by the preparations amongst the grooms and prickers for a magnificent hunt, which was to be the amusement of the next day

Leicester looked out on the blue arch of heaven, with gestures and a countenance expressive of anxious exultation, while Varney, who remained within the darkened apartment, could, himself unnoticed, with a secret satisfaction, see his patron stretch his hands with earnest gesticulation towards the heavenly bodies

'Ye distant orbs of living fire,' so ran the muttered invocation of the ambitious earl, 'ye are silent while you wheel your mystic rounds, but Wisdom has given to you a voice. Tell me, then, to what end is my high course destined? Shall the greatness to which I have aspired be bright, pre-eminent, and stable as your own, or am I but doomed to draw a brief and glittering train along the nightly darkness, and then to sink down to earth, like the base refuse of those artificial fires with which men emulate your rays?'

He looked on the heavens in profound silence for a minute or two longer, and then again stepped into the apartment, where Varney seemed to have been engaged in putting the earl's jewels into a casket

'What said Alasco of my horoscope?' demanded Leicester 'You already told me, but it has escaped me, for I think but lightly of that art'

'Many learned and great men have thought otherwise,' said Varney, 'and, not to flatter your lordship, my own opinion leans that way'

'Ay, Saul among the prophets!' said Leicester 'I thought thou wert sceptical in all such matters as thou couldst neither see, hear, smell, taste, or touch, and that thy belief was limited by thy senses'

'Perhaps, my lord,' said Varney, 'I may be misled on the

present occasion by my wish to find the predictions of astrology true Alasco says that your favourite planet is culminating, and that the adverse influence—he would not use a plainer term—though not overcome, was evidently combust, I think he said, or retrograde.’

‘It is even so,’ said Leicester, looking at an abstract of astrological calculations which he had in his hand ‘the stronger influence will prevail, and, as I think, the evil hour pass away Lend me your hand, Sir Richard, to doff my gown, and remain an instant, if it is not too burdensome to your knighthood, while I compose myself to sleep I believe the bustle of this day has fevered my blood, for it streams through my veins like a current of molten lead—remain an instant, I pray you I would fain feel my eyes heavy ere I closed them.’

Varney officiously assisted his lord to bed, and placed a massive silver night-lamp, with a short sword, on a marble table which stood close by the head of the couch. Either in order to avoid the light of the lamp, or to hide his countenance from Varney, Leicester drew the curtain, heavy with entwined silk and gold, so as completely to shade his face. Varney took a seat near the bed, but with his back towards his master, as if to intimate that he was not watching him, and quietly waited till Leicester himself led the way to the topic by which his mind was engrossed.

‘And so, Varney,’ said the earl, after waiting in vain till his dependant should commence the conversation, ‘men talk of the Queen’s favour towards me?’

‘Ay, my good lord,’ said Varney, ‘of what can they else, since it is so strongly manifested?’

‘She is indeed my good and gracious mistress,’ said Leicester, after another pause, ‘but it is written, “Put not thy trust in princes.”’

‘A good sentence and a true,’ said Varney, ‘unless you can unite their interest with yours so absolutely that they must needs sit on your wrist like hooded hawks.’

‘I know what thou meanest,’ said Leicester, impatiently, ‘though thou art to night so prudentially careful of what thou sayest to me. Thou wouldst intimate, I might marry the Queen if I would?’

‘It is your speech, my lord, not mine,’ answered Varney, ‘but whosoever be the speech, it is the thought of ninety-nine out of an hundred men throughout broad England’

'Ay, but,' said Leicester, turning himself in his bed, 'the hundredth man knows better. Thou, for example, knowest the obstacle that cannot be overleaped.'

'It must, my lord, if the stars speak true,' said Varney, composedly.

'What! talk'st thou of them,' said Leicester, 'that believest not in them or in aught else!'

'You mistake, my lord, under your gracious pardon,' said Varney. 'I believe in many things that predict the future. I believe, if showers fall in April, that we shall have flowers in May, that if the sun shines, grain will ripen, and I believe in much natural philosophy to the same effect, which, if the stars swear to me, I will say the stars speak the truth. And in like manner, I will not disbelieve that which I see wished for and expected on earth, solely because the astrologers have read it in the heavens.'

'Thou art right,' said Leicester, again tossing himself on his couch — 'earth does wish for it. I have had advices from the Reformed Churches of Germany, from the Low Countries, from Switzerland, urging this as a point on which Europe's safety depends. France will not oppose it. The ruling party in Scotland look to it as their best security. Spain fears it, but cannot prevent it. And yet thou knowest it is impossible.'

'I know not that, my lord,' said Varney. 'the countess is indisposed.'

'Villain!' said Leicester, starting up on his couch, and seizing the sword which lay on the table beside him, 'go thy thoughts that way? Thou wouldst not do murder!'

'For whom or what do you hold me, my lord?' said Varney, assuming the superiority of an innocent man subjected to unjust suspicion. 'I said nothing to deserve such a horrid imputation as your violence infers. I said but that the countess was ill. And countess though she be — lovely and beloved as she is, surely your lordship must hold her to be mortal? She may die, and your lordship's hand become once more your own.'

'Away! — away!' said Leicester, 'let me have no more of this.'

'Good-night, my lord,' said Varney, seeming to understand this as a command to depart, but Leicester's voice interrupted his purpose.

'Thou 'scapest me not thus, sir fool,' said he, 'I think thy knighthood has addled thy brains. Confess thou hast talked of impossibilities as of things which may come to pass.'

'My lord, long live your fair countess,' said Varney, 'but neither your love nor my good wishes can make her immortal. But God grant she live long to be happy herself, and to render you so! I see not but you may be King of England notwithstanding.'

'Nay, now, Varney, thou art stark mad,' said Leicester.

'I would I were myself within the same nearness to a good estate of freehold,' said Varney. 'Have we not known in other countries, how a left-handed marriage might subsist betwixt persons of differing degree? — ay, and be no hindrance to prevent the husband from conjoining himself afterwards with a more suitable partner?'

'I have heard of such things in Germany,' said Leicester.

'Ay, and the most learned doctors in foreign universities justify the practice from the Old Testament,' said Varney. 'And, after all, where is the harm? The beautiful partner whom you have chosen for true love has your secret hours of relaxation and affection. Her fame is safe, her conscience may slumber securely. You have wealth to provide royally for your issue, should Heaven bless you with offspring. Meanwhile, you may give to Elizabeth ten times the leisure, and ten thousand times the affection, that ever Don Philip of Spain spared to her sister Mary, yet you know how she doted on him though so cold and neglectful. It requires but a close mouth and an open brow, and you keep your Eleanor and your fair Rosamond far enough separate. Leave me to build you a bower to which no jealous queen shall find a clue.'

Leicester was silent for a moment, then sighed and said, 'It is impossible. Good night, Sir Richard Varney, yet stay — Can you guess what meant Tressilian by showing himself in such careless guise before the Queen to day? To strike her tender heart, I should guess, with all the sympathies due to a lover abandoned by his mistress, and abandoning himself.'

Varney, smothering a sneering laugh, answered, 'He believed Master Tressilian had no such matter in his head.'

'How!' said Leicester, 'what mean'st thou? There is ever knavery in that laugh of thine, Varney.'

'I only meant, my lord,' said Varney, 'that Tressilian has taken the sure way to avoid heart-breaking. He hath had a companion — a female companion — a mistress — a sort of player's wife or sister, as I believe — with him in Mervyn's Bower, where I quartered him for certain reasons of my own.'

'A mistress! mean'st thou a paramour?'

'Ay, my lord, what female else waits for hours in a gentleman's chamber?'

'By my faith, time and space fitting, this were a good tale to tell,' said Leicester. 'I ever distrusted those bookish, hypocritical, seeming-virtuous scholars. Well, Master Tressilian makes somewhat familiar with my house, if I look it over, he is indebted to it for certain recollections. I would not harm him more than I can help. Keep eye on him, however, Varney.'

'I lodged him for that reason,' said Varney, 'in Mervyn's Tower, where he is under the eye of my very vigilant, if he were not also my very drunken, servant, Michael Lambourne, whom I have told your Grace of.'

'Grace!' said Leicester, 'what mean'st thou by that epithet?'

'It came unawares, my lord, and yet it sounds so very natural that I cannot recall it.'

'It is thine own preferment that hath turned thy brain,' said Leicester, laughing, 'new honours are as heady as new wine.'

'May your lordship soon have cause to say so from experience,' said Varney, and, wishing his patron good-night, he withdrew.

CHAPTER XXXIII

Here stands the victim, there the proud betrayer,
E'en as the hind pull'd down by strangling dogs
Lies at the hunter's feet, who courteous proffers
To some high dame, the Dian of the chase,
To whom he looks for guerdon, his sharp blade,
To gash the sobbing throat.

The Woodsman

WE are now to return to Mervyn's Bower, the apartment, or rather the prison, of the unfortunate countess of Leicester, who for some time kept within bounds her uncertainty and her impatience. She was aware that, in the tumult of the day, there might be some delay ere her letter could be safely conveyed to the hands of Leicester, and that some time more might elapse ere he could extricate himself from the necessary attendance on Elizabeth, to come and visit her in her secret bower. 'I will not expect him,' she said, 'till night he cannot be absent from his royal guest, even to see me. He will, I know, come earlier if it be possible, but I will not expect him before night.' And yet all the while she did expect him, and, while she tried to argue herself into a contrary belief, each hasty noise, of the hundred which she heard, sounded like the hurried step of Leicester on the stair case, hasting to fold her in his arms.

The fatigue of body which Amy had lately undergone, with the agitation of mind natural to so cruel a state of uncertainty, began by degrees strongly to affect her nerves, and she almost feared her total inability to maintain the necessary self command through the scenes which might be before her. But, although spoiled by an over-indulgent system of education, Amy had naturally a mind of great power, united with a frame which her share in her father's woodland exercises had rendered uncommonly healthy. She summoned to her aid such mental and bodily resources, and not unconscious how

much the issue of her fate might depend on her own self-possession, she prayed internally for strength of body and for mental fortitude, and resolved, at the same time, to yield to no nervous impulse which might weaken either.

Yet, when the great bell of the castle, which was placed in Cæsar's Tower, at no great distance from that called Mervyn's, began to send its pealing clamour abroad, in signal of the arrival of the royal procession, the din was so painfully acute to ears rendered nervously sensitive by anxiety, that she could hardly forbear shrieking with anguish in answer to every stunning clash of the relentless peal.

Shortly afterwards, when the small apartment was at once enlightened by the shower of artificial fires with which the air was suddenly filled, and which crossed each other like fiery spirits, each bent on his own separate mission, or like salamanders executing a folk dance in the region of the sylphs, the countess felt at first as if each rocket shot close by her eyes, and discharged its sparks and flashes so nigh that she could feel a sense of the heat. But she struggled against these fantastic terrors, and compelled herself to arise, stand by the window, look out, and gaze upon a sight which at another time would have appeared to her at once captivating and fearful. The magnificent towers of the castle were enveloped in garlands of artificial fire, or shrouded with tiaras of pale smoke. The surface of the lake glowed like molten iron, while many fireworks (then thought extremely wonderful, though now common), whose flame continued to exist in the opposing element, dived and rose, hissed and roared, and spouted fire, like so many dragons of enchantment sporting upon a burning lake.

Even Amy was for a moment interested by what was to her so new a scene. 'I had thought it magical art,' she said, 'but poor Tressilian taught me to judge of such things as they are. Great God! and may not these idle splendours resemble my own hoped-for happiness — a single spark, which is instantly swallowed up by surrounding darkness — a precarious glow, which rises but for a brief space into the air, that its fall may be the lower? O Leicester! after all — all that thou hast said — hast sworn — that Amy was thy love, thy life, can it be that thou art the magician at whose nod these enchantments arise, and that she sees them as an outcast, if not a captive?'

The sustained, prolonged, and repeated bursts of music from so many different quarters, and at so many varying points

of distance, which sounded as if not the Castle of Kenilworth only, but the whole country around, had been at once the scene of solemnising some high national festival, carried the same oppressive thought still closer to her heart, while some notes would melt in distant and falling tones, as if in compassion for her sorrows, and some burst close and near upon her, as if mocking her misery, with all the insolence of unlimited mirth. 'Those sounds,' she said, 'are mine—mine because they are HIS, but I cannot say, "Be still, these loud strains suit me not"', and the voice of the meanest peasant that mingles in the dance would have more power to modulate the music than the command of her who is mistress of all !'

By degrees the sounds of revelry died away, and the countess withdrew from the window at which she had sate listening to them. It was night, but the moon afforded considerable light in the room, so that Amy was able to make the arrangement which she judged necessary. There was hope that Leicester might come to her apartment as soon as the revel in the castle had subsided, but there was also risk she might be disturbed by some unauthorised intruder. She had lost confidence in the key, since Tressilian had entered so easily, though the door was locked on the inside, yet all the additional security she could think of was to place the table across the door, that she might be warned by the noise, should any one attempt to enter. Having taken these necessary precautions, the unfortunate lady withdrew to her couch, stretched herself down on it, mused in anxious expectation, and counted more than one hour after midnight, till exhausted nature proved too strong for love, for grief, for fear, nay, even for uncertainty, and she slept.

Yes, she slept. The Indian sleeps at the stake, in the intervals between his tortures, and mental torments, in like manner, exhaust by long continuance the sensibility of the sufferer, so that an interval of lethargic repose must necessarily ensue ere the pangs which they inflict can again be renewed.

The countess slept, then, for several hours, and dreamed that she was in the ancient house at Cumnor Place, listening for the low whistle with which Leicester often used to announce his presence in the courtyard, when arriving suddenly on one of his stolen visits. But on this occasion, instead of a whistle, she heard the peculiar blast of a bugle-horn, such as her father used to wind on the fall of the stag, and which huntsmen then called a 'mort.' She ran, as she thought, to a window that

looked into the courtyard, which she saw filled with men in mourning garments. The old curate seemed about to read the funeral service. Mumblazen, tricked out in an antique dress, like an ancient herald, held aloft a scutcheon, with its usual decorations of skulls, cross-bones, and hour-glasses, surrounding a coat-of-arms, of which she could only distinguish that it was surmounted with an earl's coronet. The old man looked at her with a ghastly smile, and said, 'Amy, are they not rightly quartered?' Just as he spoke, the horns again poured on her ear the melancholy yet wild strain of the mort, or death-note, and she awoke.

The countess awoke to hear a real bugle-note, or rather the combined breath of many bugles, sounding not the mort, but the jolly reveille, to remind the inmates of the Castle of Kenilworth that the pleasures of the day were to commence with a magnificent stag-hunting in the neighbouring chase. Amy started up from her couch, listened to the sound, saw the first beams of the summer morning already twinkle through the lattice of her window, and recollected, with feelings of giddy agony, where she was, and how circumstanced.

'He thinks not of *me*,' she said — 'he will not come nigh me! A queen is his guest, and what cares he in what corner of his huge castle a wretch like me pines in doubt, which is fast fading into despair?' At once a sound at the door, as of some one attempting to open it softly, filled her with an ineffable mixture of joy and fear, and, hastening to remove the obstacle she had placed against the door, and to unlock it, she had the precaution to ask, 'Is it thou, my love?'

'Yes, my countess,' murmured a whisper in reply.

She threw open the door, and exclaiming, 'Leicester!' flung her arms around the neck of the man who stood without, muffled in his cloak.

'No — not quite Leicester,' answered Michael Lambourne, for he it was, returning the caress with vehemence — 'not quite Leicester, my lovely and most loving duchess, but as good a man.'

With an exertion of force of which she would at another time have thought herself incapable, the countess freed herself from the profane and profaning grasp of the drunken debauchee, and retreated into the midst of her apartment, where despair gave her courage to make a stand.

As Lambourne, on entering, dropped the lap of his cloak from his face, she knew Varney's profligate servant, the very

last person, excepting his detested master, by whom she would have wished to be discovered. But she was still closely muffled in her travelling dress, and as Lambourne had scarce ever been admitted to her presence at Cumnor Place, her person, she hoped, might not be so well known to him as his was to her, owing to Janet's pointing him frequently out as he crossed the court, and telling stories of his wickedness. She might have had still greater confidence in her disguise had her experience enabled her to discover that he was much intoxicated; but this could scarce have consoled her for the risk which she might incur from such a character, in such a time, place, and circumstances.

Lambourne flung the door behind him as he entered, and folding his arms, as if in mockery of the attitude of distraction into which Amy had thrown herself, he proceeded thus: 'Hark ye, most fair Calipolis—or most lovely countess of clouts, and divine duchess of dark corners—if thou takest all that trouble of skewering thyself together, like a trussed fowl, that there may be more pleasure in the carving, even save thyself the labour. I love thy first frank manner the best, like thy present as little (he made a step towards her, and staggered)—as little as—such a damned uneven floor as this, where a gentleman may break his neck, if he does not walk as upright as a posture-master on the tight-rope.'

'Stand back!' said the countess: 'do not approach nearer to me on thy peril!'

'My peril! and stand back! Why, how now, madam? Must you have a better mate than honest Mike Lambourne? I have been in America, girl, where the gold grows, and have brought off such a load on't——'

'Good friend,' said the countess in great terror at the ruffian's determined and audacious manner, 'I prithee begone, and leave me.'

'And so I will, pretty one, when we are tired of each other's company, not a jot sooner.' He seized her by the arm, while, incapable of further defence, she uttered shriek upon shriek. 'Nay, scream away if you like it,' said he, still holding her fast, 'I have heard the sea at the loudest, and I mind a squalling woman no more than a miauling kitten. Damn me! I have heard fifty or a hundred screaming at once, when there was a town stormed.'

The cries of the countess, however, brought unexpected aid, in the person of Laurence Staples, who had heard her exclamations from his apartment below, and entered in good time to

save her from being discovered, if not from more atrocious violence. Laurence was drunk also from the debauch of the preceding night, but fortunately his intoxication had taken a different turn from that of Lambourne.

'What the devil's noise is this in the ward?' he said. 'What! man and woman together in the same cell! that is against rule. I will have decency under my rule, by St Peter of the Fetters.'

'Get thee downstairs, thou drunken beast,' said Lambourne; 'seest thou not the lady and I would be private?'

'Good sir — worthy sir,' said the countess, addressing the jailor, 'do but save me from him, for the sake of mercy!'

'She speaks fairly,' said the jailor, 'and I will take her part. I love my prisoners, and I have had as good prisoners under my key as they have had in Newgate or the Compter. And so, being one of my lambkins, as I say, no one shall disturb her in her penfold. So, let go the woman, or I'll knock your brains out with my keys.'

'I'll make a blood-pudding of thy midriff first,' answered Lambourne, laying his left hand on his dagger, but still detaining the countess by the arm with his right. 'So have at thee, thou old ostrich, whose only living is upon a bunch of iron keys!'

Laurence raised the arm of Michael, and prevented him from drawing his dagger, and as Lambourne struggled and strove to shake him off, the countess made a sudden exertion on her side, and slipping her hand out of the glove on which the ruffian still kept hold, she gained her liberty and, escaping from the apartment, ran downstairs, while, at the same moment, she heard the two combatants fall on the floor with a noise which increased her terror. The outer wicket offered no impediment to her flight, having been opened for Lambourne's admittance, so that she succeeded in escaping down the stair, and fled into the Pleasance, which seemed to her hasty glance the direction in which she was most likely to avoid pursuit.

Meanwhile, Laurence and Lambourne rolled on the floor of the apartment, closely grappled together. Neither had, happily, opportunity to draw their daggers, but Laurence found space enough to dash his heavy keys across Michael's face, and Michael, in return, grasped the turnkey so felly by the throat that the blood gushed from nose and mouth, so that they were both gory and filthy spectacles, when one of the other officers of the household, attracted by the noise of

the fray, entered the room, and with some difficulty effected the separation of the combatants.

'A murrain on you both,' said the charitable mediator, 'and especially on you, Master Lambourne! What the fiend lie you here for, fighting on the floor, like two butchers' curs in the kennel of the shambles?'

Lambourne arose, and, somewhat sobered by the interposition of a third party, looked with something less than his usual brazen impudence of visage. 'We fought for a wench, an thou must know,' was his reply.

'A wench! Where is she?' said the officer.

'Why, vanished, I think,' said Lambourne, looking around him, 'unless Laurence hath swallowed her. That filthy paunch of his devours as many distressed damsels and oppressed orphans as e'er a giant in King Arthur's history: they are his prime food, he worries them body, soul, and substance.'

'Ay—ay! It's no matter,' said Laurence, gathering up his huge ungainly form from the floor, 'but I have had your betters, Master Michael Lambourne, under the little turn of my forefinger and thumb, and I shall have thee, before all's done, under my hatches. The impudence of thy brow will not always save thy shin-bones from iron, and thy foul thirsty gullet from a hempen cord.' The words were no sooner out of his mouth than Lambourne again made at him.

'Nay, go not to it again,' said the sewer, 'or I will call for him shall tame you both, and that is Master Varney—Sir Richard, I mean, he is stirring, I promise you. I saw him cross the court just now.'

'Didst thou, by G—?' said Lambourne, seizing on the basin and ewer which stood in the apartment. 'Nay, then, element, do thy work. I thought I had enough of thee last night, when I floated about for Orton, like a cork on a fermenting cask of ale.'

So saying, he fell to work to cleanse from his face and hands the signs of the fray, and get his apparel into some order.

'What hast thou done to him?' said the sewer, speaking aside to the jailor, 'his face is fearfully swelled.'

'It is but the imprint of the key of my cabinet, too good a mark for his gallows face. No man shall abuse or insult my prisoners, they are my jewels, and I lock them in safe casket accordingly. And so, mistress, leave off your wailing. Hey! why, surely there was a woman here!'

'I think you are all mad this morning,' said the sewer. 'I

saw no woman here, nor no man neither in a proper sense, but only two beasts rolling on the floor'

'Nay, then, I am undone,' said the jailor. 'the prison's broken, that is all. Kenilworth prison is broken,' he continued, in a tone of maudlin lamentation, 'which was the strongest jail betwixt this and the Welsh marches — ay, and a house that has had knights, and earls, and kings sleeping in it, as secure as if they had been in the Tower of London. It is broken, the prisoners fled, and the jailor in much danger of being hanged!'

So saying, he retreated down to his own den to conclude his lamentations, or to sleep himself sober. Lambourne and the sewer followed him close, and it was well for them, since the jailor, out of mere habit, was about to lock the wicket after him, and had they not been within the reach of interfering, they would have had the pleasure of being shut up in the turret-chamber, from which the countess had been just delivered.

That unhappy lady, as soon as she found herself at liberty, fled, as we have already mentioned, into the Pleasance. She had seen this richly ornamented space of ground from the window of Mervyn's Tower, and it occurred to her, at the moment of her escape, that, among its numerous arbours, bowers, fountains, statues, and grottoes, she might find some recess, in which she could lie concealed until she had an opportunity of addressing herself to a protector, to whom she might communicate as much as she dared of her forlorn situation, and through whose means she might supplicate an interview with her husband.

'If I could see my guide,' she thought, 'I would learn if he had delivered my letter. Even did I but see Tressilian, it were better to risk Dudley's anger, by confiding my whole situation to one who is the very soul of honour, than to run the hazard of farther insult among the insolent menials of this ill-ruled place. I will not again venture into an inclosed apartment. I will wait — I will watch, amidst so many human beings, there must be some kind heart which can judge and compassionate what mine endures.'

In truth, more than one party entered and traversed the Pleasance. But they were in joyous groups of four or five persons together, laughing and jesting in their own fulness of mirth and lightness of heart.

The retreat which she had chosen gave her the easy alternative of avoiding observation. It was but stepping back to

the farthest recess of a grotto, ornamented with rustic work and moss seats, and terminated by a fountain, and she might easily remain concealed, or at her pleasure discover herself to any solitary wanderer whose curiosity might lead him to that romantic retirement. Anticipating such an opportunity, she looked into the clear basin which the silent fountain held up to her like a mirror, and felt shocked at her own appearance, and doubtful at the same time, muffled and disfigured as her disguise made her seem to herself, whether any female (and it was from the compassion of her own sex that she chiefly expected sympathy) would engage in conference with so suspicious an object. Reasoning thus like a woman, to whom external appearance is scarcely in any circumstances a matter of unimportance, and like a beauty, who had some confidence in the power of her own charms, she laid aside her travelling cloak and capotaine hat, and placed them beside her, so that she could assume them in an instant, ere one could penetrate from the entrance of the grotto to its extremity, in case the intrusion of Varney or of Lambourne should render such disguise necessary. The dress which she wore under these vestments was somewhat of a theatrical cast, so as to suit the assumed personage of one of the females who was to act in the pageant. Wayland had found the means of arranging it thus upon the second day of their journey, having experienced the service arising from the assumption of such a character on the preceding day. The fountain, acting both as a mirror and ewer, afforded Amy the means of a brief toilette, of which she availed herself as hastily as possible, then took in her hand her small casket of jewels, in case she might find them useful intercessors, and retiring to the darkest and most sequestered nook, sat down on a seat of moss, and awaited till fate should give her some chance of rescue or of propitiating an intercessor.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Have you not seen the partridge quake,
Viewing the hawk approaching nigh ?
She cuddles close beneath the brake,
Afraid to sit, afraid to fly

PRIOR.

IT chanced, upon that memorable morning, that one of the earliest of the huntress train who appeared from her chamber in full array for the chase was the princess for whom all these pleasures were instituted, England's Maiden Queen. I know not if it were by chance, or out of the befitting courtesy due to a mistress by whom he was so much honoured, that she had scarcely made one step beyond the threshold of her chamber ere Leicester was by her side, and proposed to her, until the preparations for the chase had been completed, to view the Pleasance and the gardens which it connected with the castle-yard.

To this new scene of pleasures they walked, the earl's arm affording his sovereign the occasional support which she required, where flights of steps, then a favourite ornament in a garden, conducted them from terrace to terrace and from parterre to parterre. The ladies in attendance, gifted with prudence, or endowed perhaps with the amiable desire of acting as they would be done by, did not conceive their duty to the Queen's person required them, though they lost not sight of her, to approach so near as to share, or perhaps disturb, the conversation betwixt the Queen and the earl, who was not only her host, but also her most trusted, esteemed, and favoured servant. They contented themselves with admiring the grace of this illustrious couple, whose robes of state were now exchanged for hunting-suits, almost equally magnificent.

Elizabeth's silvan dress, which was of a pale blue silk, with silver lace and *arguilletes*, approached in form to that of the ancient Amazons, and was, therefore, well suited at once to

her height and to the dignity of her mien, which her conscious rank and long habits of authority had rendered in some degree too masculine to be seen to the best advantage in ordinary female weeds. Leicester's hunting-suit of Lincoln green, richly embroidered with gold, and crossed by the gay baldric, which sustained a bugle horn, and a wood-knife instead of a sword, became its master, as did his other vestments of court or of war. For such were the perfections of his form and mien, that Leicester was always supposed to be seen to the greatest advantage in the character and dress which for the time he represented or wore.

The conversation of Elizabeth and the favourite earl has not reached us in detail. But those who watched at some distance (and the eyes of courtiers and court ladies are right sharp) were of opinion that on no occasion did the dignity of Elizabeth, in gesture and motion, seem so decidedly to soften away into a mien expressive of indecision and tenderness. Her step was not only slow, but even unequal, a thing most unwonted in her carriage, her looks seemed bent on the ground, and there was a timid disposition to withdraw from her companion, which external gesture in females often indicates exactly the opposite tendency in the secret mind. The Dutchess of Rutland, who ventured nearest, was even heard to aver that she discerned a tear in Elizabeth's eye and a blush on her cheek, and still farther, 'She bent her looks on the ground to avoid mine,' said the duchess, 'she who, in her ordinary mood, could look down a lion.' To what conclusion these symptoms led is sufficiently evident, nor were they probably entirely groundless. The progress of private conversation betwixt two persons of different sexes is often decisive of their fate, and gives it a turn very different perhaps from what they themselves anticipated. Gallantry becomes mingled with conversation, and affection and passion come gradually to mix with gallantry. Nobles, as well as shepherd swains, will, in such a trying moment, say more than they intended, and queens, like village maidens, will listen longer than they should.

Horses in the meanwhile neighed and champed the bits with impatience in the base court, hounds yelled in their couples, and yeomen, rangers, and prickers lamented the exhaling of the dew, which would prevent the scent from lying. But Leicester had another chase in view, or, to speak more justly towards him, had become engaged in it without premeditation, as the high spirited hunter which follows the cry of the hounds that

have crossed his path by accident. The Queen, an accomplished and handsome woman — the pride of England, the hope of France and Holland, and the dread of Spain, had probably listened with more than usual favour to that mixture of romantic gallantry with which she always loved to be addressed, and the earl had, in vanity, in ambition, or in both, thrown in more and more of that delicious ingredient, until his importunity became the language of love itself

‘No, Dudley,’ said Elizabeth, yet it was with broken accents — ‘no, I must be the mother of my people. Other ties, that make the lowly maiden happy, are denied to her sovereign. No, Leicester, urge it no more. Were I as others, free to seek my own happiness, then, indeed — but it cannot — cannot be. Delay the chase — delay it for half an hour — and leave me, my lord.’

‘How, leave you, madam!’ said Leicester. ‘Has my madness offended you?’

‘No, Leicester, not so!’ answered the Queen, hastily, ‘but it is madness, and must not be repeated. Go, but go not far from hence, and meantime let no one intrude on my privacy.’

While she spoke thus, Dudley bowed deeply, and retired with a slow and melancholy air. The Queen stood gazing after him, and murmured to herself — ‘Were it possible — were it *but* possible!’ But no — no, Elizabeth must be the wife and mother of England alone.

As she spoke thus, and in order to avoid some one whose step she heard approaching, the Queen turned into the grotto in which her hapless, and yet but too successful, rival lay concealed.

The mind of England’s Elizabeth, if somewhat shaken by the agitating interview to which she had just put a period, was of that firm and decided character which soon recovers its natural tone. It was like one of those ancient druidical monuments called rocking-stones. The finger of Cupid, boy as he is painted, could put her feelings in motion, but the power of Hercules could not have destroyed their equilibrium. As she advanced with a slow pace towards the inmost extremity of the grotto, her countenance, ere she had proceeded half the length, had recovered its dignity of look and her mien its air of command.

It was then the Queen became aware that a female figure was placed beside, or rather partly behind, an alabaster column, at the foot of which arose the pellucid fountain, which occupied

inmost recess of the twilight grotto The classical mind of Elizabeth suggested the story of Numa and Egeria, and she doubted not that some Italian sculptor had here represented Numæ whose inspirations gave laws to Rome As she advanced, she became doubtful whether she beheld a statue or form of flesh and blood The unfortunate Amy, indeed, remained motionless, betwixt the desire which she had to make her condition known to one of her own sex and her awe for the lovely form which approached her, and which, though her eyes had never before beheld, her fears instantly suspected to be the personage she really was Amy had arisen from her seat with the purpose of addressing the lady who entered the grotto, and, as she at first thought, so opportunely But when she recollected the alarm which Leicester had expressed at the men's knowing ought of their union, and became more and more satisfied that the person whom she now beheld was Elizabeth herself, she stood with one foot advanced and one withdrawn, her arms, head, and hands perfectly motionless, and her cheek as pallid as the alabaster pedestal against which she leaned Her dress was of pale sea-green silk, little distinguished from that unperfect light, and somewhat resembled the drapery of an Ercian nymph, such an antique disguise having been thought most secure, where so many masquers and revellers were assembled, so that the Queen's doubt of her being a living person was well justified by all contingent circumstances, as well by the bloodless cheek and the fixed eye Elizabeth remained in doubt, even after she had approached him a few paces, whether she did not gaze on a statue so ingeniously fashioned that by the doubtful light it could not be distinguished from reality She stopped, therefore, and fixed on this interesting object her princely look with so much earnestness that the astonishment which had kept Amy invisible gave way to awe, and she gradually cast down her eyes and drooped her head under the commanding gaze of the sovereign Still, however, she remained in all respects, saving a slow and profound inclination of the head, motionless and silent.

From her dress, and the casket which she instinctively held in her hand, Elizabeth naturally conjectured that the beautiful and mute figure which she beheld was a performer in one of the numerous theatrical pageants which had been placed in different situations to surprise her with their homage, and that the poor player, overcome with awe at her presence, had either forgot

the part assigned her or lacked courage to go through it. It was natural and courteous to give her some encouragement; and Elizabeth accordingly said, in a tone of condescending kindness, 'How now, fair nymph of this lovely grotto, art thou spell-bound and struck with dumbness by the wicked enchanter whom men term fear? We are his sworn enemy, maiden, and can reverse his charm. Speak, we command thee.'

Instead of answering her by speech, the unfortunate countess dropped on her knee before the Queen, let her casket fall from her hand, and clasping her palms together, looked up in the Queen's face with such a mixed agony of fear and supplication that Elizabeth was considerably affected.

'What may this mean?' she said, 'this is a stronger passion than befits the occasion. Stand up, damsel, what wouldst thou have with us?'

'Your protection, madam,' faltered forth the unhappy petitioner.

'Each daughter of England has it while she is worthy of it,' replied the Queen, 'but your distress seems to have a deeper root than a forgotten task. Why, and in what, do you crave our protection?'

Amy hastily endeavoured to recall what she were best to say, which might secure herself from the imminent dangers that surrounded her, without endangering her husband, and plunging from one thought to another, amidst the chaos which filled her mind, she could at length, in answer to the Queen's repeated inquiries in what she sought protection, only falter out, 'Alas! I know not.'

'This is folly, maiden,' said Elizabeth, impatiently, for there was something in the extreme confusion of the suppliant which irritated her curiosity, as well as interested her feelings. 'The sick man must tell his malady to the physician, nor are we accustomed to ask questions so oft without receiving an answer.'

'I request—I implore,' stammered forth the unfortunate countess—'I beseech your gracious protection—against—against one Varney.' She choked wellnigh as she uttered the fatal word, which was instantly caught up by the Queen.

'What Varney? Sir Richard Varney—the servant of Lord Leicester? What, damsel, are you to him, or he to you?'

'I—I—was his prisoner—and he practised on my life—and I broke forth to—to——'

'To throw thyself on my protection, doubtless,' said Eliza-

beth 'Thou shalt have it—that is, if thou art worthy, for we will sift this matter to the uttermost 'Thou art,' she said, bending on the countess an eye which seemed designed to pierce her very inmost soul—'thou art Amy, daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart of Ladcote Hall?'

'Forgive me—forgive me, most gracious princess!' said Amy, dropping once more on her knee, from which she had arisen

'For what should I forgive thee, silly wench?' said Elizabeth, 'for being the daughter of thine own father? Thou art brain-sick, surely Well, I see I must wring the story from thee by inches. Thou didst deceive thine old and honoured father—thy look confesses it, cheated Master Tressilian—thy blush avouches it, and married this same Varney?'

Amy sprung on her feet, and interrupted the Queen eagerly, with, 'No, madam—no, as there is a God above us, I am not the sordid wretch you would make me! I am not the wife of that contemptible slave—of that most deliberate villain! I am not the wife of Varney! I would rather be the bride of destruction!'

The Queen, overwhelmed in her turn by Amy's vehemence, stood silent for an instant, and then replied, 'Why, God ha' mercy, woman! I see thou canst talk fast enough when the theme likes thee. Nay, tell me, woman,' she continued, for to the impulse of curiosity was now added that of an undefined jealousy that some deception had been practised on her—'tell me, woman—for, by God's day, I WILL know—whose wife, or whose paramour, art thou? Speak out, and be speedy Thou wert better dally with a honess than with Elizabeth.'

Urged to this extremity, dragged as it were by irresistible force to the verge of a precipice, which she saw but could not avoid, permitted not a moment's respite by the eager words and menacing gestures of the offended Queen, Amy at length uttered in despair, 'The Earl of Leicester knows it all.'

'The Earl of Leicester!' said Elizabeth, in utter astonishment. 'The Earl of Leicester!' she repeated, with kindling anger 'Woman, thou art set on to this—thou dost belie him he takes no keep of such things as thou art. Thou art suborned to slander the noblest lord and the truest-hearted gentleman in England! But were he the right hand of our trust, or something yet dearer to us, thou shalt have thy hearing, and that in his presence. Come with me—come with me instantly!'

to the uttermost, and, supporting with one hand, and apparently without an effort, the pale and sinking form of his almost expiring wife, and pointing with the finger of the other to her half-dead features, demanded in a voice that sounded to the ear of the astounded statesman like the last dread trumpet-call, that is to summon body and spirit to the judgment-seat, 'Knowest thou this woman?'

As, at the blast of that last trumpet, the guilty shall call upon the mountains to cover them, Leicester's inward thoughts invoked the stately arch which he had built in his pride to burst its strong conjunction and overwhelm them in its ruins. But the cemented stones, architrave and battlement, stood fast, and it was the proud master himself who, as if some actual pressure had bent him to the earth, kneeled down before Elizabeth, and prostrated his brow to the marble flagstones on which she stood.

'Leicester,' said Elizabeth, in a voice which trembled with passion, 'could I think thou hast practised on me — on me thy sovereign — on me thy confiding, thy too partial mistress, the base and ungrateful deception which thy present confusion surmises — by all that is holy, false lord, that head of thine were in as great peril as ever was thy father's!'

Leicester had not conscious innocence, but he had pride, to support him. He raised slowly his brow and features, which were black and swollen with contending emotions, and only replied, 'My head cannot fall but by the sentence of my peers, to them I will plead, and not to a princess who thus requites my faithful service!'

'What! my lords,' said Elizabeth, looking around, 'we are defied, I think — defied in the castle we have ourselves bestowed on this proud man! My Lord Shrewsbury, you are marshal of England, attach him of high treason!'

'Whom does your Grace mean!' said Shrewsbury, much surprised, for he had that instant joined the astonished circle.

'Whom should I mean but that traitor, Dudley Earl of Leicester! Cousin of Hunsdon, order out your band of gentlemen pensioners, and take him into instant custody I say, villain, make haste!'

Hunsdon, a rough old noble, who, from his relationship to the Boleyns, was accustomed to use more freedom with the Queen than almost any other dared to do, replied bluntly, 'And it is like your Grace might order me to the Tower to-morrow for making too much haste. I do beseech you to be patient.'

'Patient! God's life!' exclaimed the Queen, name not the word to me, thou know'st not of what he is guilty!'

Amy, who had by this time in some degree recovered herself, and who saw her husband, as she conceived, in the utmost danger from the rage of an offended sovereign, instantly (and alas! how many women have done the same) forgot her own wrongs and her own danger in her apprehensions for him, and throwing herself before the Queen, embraced her knees, while she exclaimed, 'He is guiltless, madam—he is guiltless no one can lay aught to the charge of the noble Leicester!'

'Why, minion,' answered the Queen, 'didst not thou thyself say that the Earl of Leicester was privy to thy whole history?'

'Did I say so?' repeated the unhappy Amy, laying aside every consideration of consistency and of self-interest, 'Oh, if I did, I foully belied him. May God so judge me, as I believe he was never privy to a thought that would harm me!'

'Woman!' said Elizabeth, 'I will know who has moved thee to this, or my wrath—and the wrath of kings is a flaming fire—shall wither and consume thee like a weed in the furnace.'

As the Queen uttered this threat, Leicester's better angel called his pride to his aid, and reproached him with the utter extremity of meanness which would overwhelm him for ever if he stooped to take shelter under the generous interposition of his wife, and abandoned her, in return for her kindness, to the resentment of the Queen. He had already raised his head, with the dignity of a man of honour, to avow his marriage, and proclaim himself the protector of his countess, when Varney, born, as it appeared, to be his master's evil genius, rushed into the presence, with every mark of disorder on his face and apparel.

'What means this saucy intrusion?' said Elizabeth

Varney, with the air of a man overwhelmed with grief and confusion, prostrated himself before her feet, exclaiming, 'Pardon, my liege—pardon! or at least let your justice avenge itself on me, where it is due, but spare my noble, my generous, my innocent patron and master!'

Amy, who was yet kneeling, started up as she saw the man whom she deemed most odious place himself so near her, and was about to fly towards Leicester, when, checked at once by the uncertainty and even timidity which his looks had reassumed as soon as the appearance of his confidant seemed to

open a new scene, she hung back, and, uttering a faint scream, besought of her Majesty to cause her to be unpriſoned in the loweſt dungeon of the caſtle — to deal with her as the worſt of criminals — ‘but ſpare,’ ſhe exclaimed, ‘my ſight and hearing what will deſtroy the little judgment I have left — the ſight of that unutterable and moſt ſhameleſs villain!’

‘And why, ſweetheart?’ ſaid the Queen, moved by a new impuſe, ‘what hath he, this falſe knight, ſince ſuch thou accounteſt him, done to thee?’

‘Oh, worſe than ſorrow, madam, and worſe than injury he has ſown diſſenſion where moſt there ſhould be peace I ſhall go mad if I look longer on him!’

‘Beſhrew me, but I think thou art diſtraught already,’ answered the Queen. ‘My Lord Hunsdon, look to this poor diſtreſſed young woman, and let her be ſafely beſtowed and in honeſt keeping till we require her to be forthcoming.’

Two or three of the ladies in attendance, either moved by compaſſion for a creature ſo intereſting or by ſome other motive, offered their ſervice to look after her, but the Queen briefly answered, ‘Ladies, under favour, no You have all, give God thanks’ ſharp ears and nimble tongues, our kinsman Hunsdon has ears of the dulleſt, and a tongue ſomewhat rough, but yet of the ſloweſt. Hunsdon, look to it that none have ſpeech of her’

‘By Our Lady!’ ſaid Hunsdon, taking in his ſtrong, ſinewy arms the fading and almoſt ſwooning form of Amy, ‘ſhe is a lovely child, and though a rough nurse, your Grace hath given her a kind one. She is ſafe with me as one of my own lady-birds of daughters.’

So ſaying, he carried her off, unreſiſtingly and almoſt unconſciouſly, his war-worn locks and long grey beard mungling with her light-brown tresses, as her head reclined on his ſtrong ſquare ſhoulder. The Queen followed him with her eye, ſhe had already, with that ſelf command which forms ſo neceſſary a part of a ſovereign’s accompliſhments, ſuppreſſed every appearance of agitation, and ſeemed as if ſhe deſired to baniſh all traces of her buſt of paſſion from the recollection of thoſe who had wiſſeſſed it. ‘My Lord of Hunsdon ſays well,’ ſhe obſerved, ‘he is indeed but a rough nurse for ſo tender a babe’

‘My Lord of Hunsdon,’ ſaid the Dean of St Asaph’s, ‘I ſpeak it not in defamation of his more noble qualities, hath a broad license in ſpeech, and garniſhes his diſcourſe ſomewhat too

freely with the cruel and superstitious oaths, which savour both of profaneness and of old Papistrie'

'It is the fault of his blood, Mr. Dean,' said the Queen, turning sharply round upon the reverend dignitary as she spoke, 'and you may blame mine for the same distemperature. The Boleyns were ever a hot and plain-spoken race, more hasty to speak their mind than careful to choose their expressions. And, by my word — I hope there is no sin in that affirmation? — I question if it were much cooled by mixing with that of Tudor'

As she made this last observation, she smiled graciously, and stole her eyes almost insensibly round to seek those of the Earl of Leicester, to whom she now began to think she had spoken with hasty harshness upon the unfounded suspicion of a moment

The Queen's eye found the earl in no mood to accept the implied offer of conciliation. His own looks had followed, with late and rueful repentance, the faded form which Hunsdon had just borne from the presence, they now reposed gloomingly on the ground, but more — so at least it seemed to Elizabeth — with the expression of one who has received an unjust affront than of him who is conscious of guilt. She turned her face angrily from him, and said to Varney, 'Speak, Sir Richard, and explain these riddles, thou hast sense and the use of speech, at least, which elsewhere we look for in vain.'

As she said this, she darted another resentful glance towards Leicester, while the wily Varney hastened to tell his own story

'Your Majesty's piercing eye,' he said, 'has already detected the cruel malady of my beloved lady, which, unhappy that I am, I would not suffer to be expressed in the certificate of her physician, seeking to conceal what has now broken out with so much the more scandal.'

'She is then distraught?' said the Queen, 'indeed, we doubted not of it. her whole demeanour bears it out. I found her moping in a corner of yonder grotto, and every word she spoke — which indeed I dragged from her as by the rack — she instantly recalled and forswore. But how came she hither? Why had you her not in safe-keeping?'

'My gracious liege,' said Varney, 'the worthy gentleman under whose charge I left her, Master Anthony Foster, has come hither but now, as fast as man and horse can travel, to

show me of her escape, which she managed with the art peculiar to many who are afflicted with this malady. He is at hand for examination.

'Let it be for another time,' said the Queen. 'But, Sir Richard, we envy you not your domestic felicity. your lady railed on you bitterly, and seemed ready to swoon at beholding you.'

'It is the nature of persons in her disorder, so please your Grace,' answered Varney, 'to be ever most inveterate in their spleen against those whom, in their better moments, they hold nearest and dearest.'

'We have heard so, indeed,' said Elizabeth, 'and give faith to the saying.'

'May your Grace then be pleased,' said Varney, 'to command my unfortunate wife to be delivered into the custody of her friends?'

Leicester partly started, but, making a strong effort, he subdued his emotion, while Elizabeth answered sharply, 'You are something too hasty, Master Varney, we will have first a report of the lady's health and state of mind from Masters, our own physician, and then determine what shall be thought just. You shall have license, however, to see her, that, if there be any matrimonial quarrel betwixt you — such things we have heard do occur, even betwixt a loving couple — you may make it up, without further scandal to our court or trouble to ourselves.'

Varney bowed low, and made no other answer.

Elizabeth again looked towards Leicester, and said, with a degree of condescension which could only arise out of the most heartfelt interest, 'Discord, as the Italian poet says, will find her way into peaceful convents, as well as into the privacy of families, and we fear our own guards and ushers will hardly exclude her from courts. My Lord of Leicester, you are offended with us, and we have right to be offended with you. We will take the lion's part upon us, and be the first to forgive.'

Leicester smoothed his brow, as if by an effort, but the trouble was too deep-seated that its placidity should at once return. He said, however, that which fitted the occasion, 'That he could not have the happiness of forgiving, because she who commanded him to do so could commit no injury towards him.'

Elizabeth seemed content with this reply, and intimated her pleasure that the sports of the morning should proceed. 'The bugles sounded — the hounds bayed — the horses pranced, but the courtiers and ladies sought the amusements to which they

were summoned with hearts very different from those which had leaped to the morning's reveille. There was doubt, and fear, and expectation on every brow, and surmise and intrigue in every whisper.

Blount took an opportunity to whisper into Raleigh's ear, 'This storm came like a levanter in the Mediterranean.'

'*Varium et mutabile*,' answered Raleigh, in a similar tone.

'Nay, I know nought of your Latin,' said Blount, 'but I thank God Tressilian took not the sea during that hurricane. He could scarce have missed shipwreck, knowing as he does so little how to trim his sails to a court gale.'

'Thou wouldst have instructed him?' said Raleigh.

'Why, I have profited by my time as well as thou, Sir Walter,' replied honest Blount. 'I am knight as well as thou, and of the earlier creation.'

'Now, God further thy wit,' said Raleigh, 'but for Tressilian, I would I knew what were the matter with him. He told me this morning he would not leave his chamber for the space of twelve hours or thereby, being bound by a promise. This lady's madness, when he shall learn it, will not, I fear, cure his infirmity. The moon is at the fullest, and men's brains are working like yeast. But hark! they sound to mount. Let us to horse, Blount: we young knights must deserve our spurs.'

CHAPTER XXXV

Sincerity,
Thou first of virtues, let no mortal leave
Thy onward path, although the earth should gape,
And from the gulf of hell destruction cry,
To take dissimulation's winding way

Douglas

IT was not till after a long and successful morning's sport, and a prolonged repast which followed the return of the Queen to the castle, that Leicester at length found himself alone with Varney, from whom he now learned the whole particulars of the countess's escape, as they had been brought to Kenilworth by Foster, who, in his terror for the consequences, had himself posted thither with the tidings. As Varney, in his narrative, took especial care to be silent concerning those practices on the countess's health which had driven her to so desperate a resolution, Leicester, who could only suppose that she had adopted it out of jealous impatience to attain the avowed state and appearance belonging to her rank, was not a little offended at the levity with which his wife had broken his strict commands, and exposed him to the resentment of Elizabeth.

'I have given,' he said, 'to this daughter of an obscure Devonshire gentleman the proudest name in England. I have made her sharer of my bed and of my fortunes. I ask but of her a little patience, ere she launches forth upon the full current of her grandeur, and the infatuated woman will rather hazard her own shipwreck and mine, will rather involve me in a thousand whirlpools, shoals, and quicksands, and compel me to a thousand devices which shame me in mine own eyes, than tarry for a little space longer in the obscurity to which she was born. So lovely, so delicate, so fond, so faithful, yet to lack in so grave a matter the prudence which one might hope from the veriest fool — it puts me beyond my patience.'

'We may post it over yet well enough,' said Varney, 'if my

lady will be but ruled, and take on her the character which the time commands'

'It is but too true, Sir Richard,' said Leicester, 'there is indeed no other remedy. I have heard her termed thy wife in my presence, without contradiction. She must bear the title until she is far from Kenilworth.'

'And long afterwards, I trust,' said Varney, then instantly added, 'For I cannot but hope it will be long after ere she bear the title of Lady Leicester. I fear me it may scarce be with safety during the life of this Queen. But your lordship is best judge, you alone knowing what passages have taken place betwixt Elizabeth and you.'

'You are right, Varney,' said Leicester, 'I have this morning been both fool and villain, and when Elizabeth hears of my unhappy marriage, she cannot but think herself treated with that premeditated slight which women never forgive. We have once this day stood upon terms little short of defiance, and to those, I fear, we must again return.'

'Is her resentment, then, so implacable?' said Varney.

'Far from it,' replied the earl, 'for, being what she is in spirit and in station, she has even this day been but too condescending, in giving me opportunities to repair what she thinks my faulty heat of temper.'

'Ay,' answered Varney, 'the Italians say right. in lovers' quarrels the party that loves most is always most willing to acknowledge the greater fault. So then, my lord, if this union with the lady could be concealed, you stand with Elizabeth as you did?'

Leicester sighed, and was silent for a moment, ere he replied.

'Varney, I think thou art true to me, and I will tell thee all. I do *not* stand where I did. I have spoken to Elizabeth — under what mad impulse I know not — on a theme which cannot be abandoned without touching every female feeling to the quick, and which yet I dare not and cannot prosecute. She can never, never forgive me for having caused and witnessed those yieldings to human passion.'

'We must do something, my lord,' said Varney, 'and that speedily.'

'There is nought to be done,' answered Leicester, despondingly, 'I am like one that has long toiled up a dangerous precipice, and when he is within one perilous stride of the top, finds his progress arrested when retreat has become impossible. I see above me the pinnacle which I cannot reach, beneath me the

abyss into which I must fall, as soon as my relaxing grasp and dizzy brain join to hurl me from my present precarious stance’

‘Think better of your situation, my lord,’ said Varney, ‘let us try the experiment in which you have but now acquiesced. Keep we your marriage from Elizabeth’s knowledge, and all may yet be well. I will instantly go to the lady myself. She hates me, because I have been earnest with your lordship, as she truly suspects, in opposition to what she terms her rights. I care not for her prejudices. She *shall* listen to me, and I will show her such reasons for yielding to the pressure of the times, that I doubt not to bring back her consent to whatever measures these exigencies may require.’

‘No, Varney,’ said Leicester, ‘I have thought upon what is to be done, and I will myself speak with Amy’

It was now Varney’s turn to feel, upon his own account, the terrors which he affected to participate solely on account of his patron. ‘Your lordship will not yourself speak with the lady?’

‘It is my fixed purpose,’ said Leicester, ‘fetch me one of the livery cloaks, I will pass the sentinel as thy servant. Thou art to have free access to her’

‘But, my lord —’

‘I will have no “buts,”’ replied Leicester, ‘it shall be even thus, and not otherwise. Hunsdon sleeps, I think, in Saintlowe’s Tower. We can go thither from these apartments by the private passage, without risk of meeting any one. Or what if I do meet Hunsdon? he is more my friend than enemy, and thick-witted enough to adopt any belief that is thrust on him. Fetch me the cloak instantly’

Varney had no alternative save obedience. In a few minutes Leicester was muffled in the mantle, pulled his bonnet over his brows, and followed Varney along the secret passage of the castle which communicated with Hunsdon’s apartments, in which there was scarce a chance of meeting any inquisitive person, and hardly light enough for any such to have satisfied their curiosity. They emerged at a door where Lord Hunsdon had, with military precaution, placed a sentinel, one of his own northern retainers as it fortune, who readily admitted Sir Richard Varney and his attendant, saying only, in his northern dialect, ‘I would, man, thou couldst make the mad lady be still yonder, for her moans do sae dirl through my head that I would rather keep watch on a snow drift in the wastes of Catlowdie.’

They hastily entered, and shut the door behind them.

'Now, good devil, if there be one,' said Varney, within himself, 'for once help a votary at a dead pinch, for my boat is among the breakers!'

The Countess Amy, with her hair and her garments dishevelled, was seated upon a sort of couch, in an attitude of the deepest affliction, out of which she was startled by the opening of the door. She turned hastily round, and, fixing her eye on Varney, exclaimed, 'Wretch! art thou come to frame some new plan of villany?'

Leicester cut short her reproaches by stepping forward and dropping his cloak, while he said, in a voice rather of authority than of affection, 'It is with me, madam, you have to commune, not with Sir Richard Varney.'

The change effected on the countess's look and manner was like magic. 'Dudley!' she exclaimed — 'Dudley! and art thou come at last?' And with the speed of lightning she flew to her husband, clung around his neck, and, unheeding the presence of Varney, overwhelmed him with caresses, while she bathed his face in a flood of tears, muttering, at the same time, but in broken and disjointed monosyllables, the fondest expressions which love teaches his votaries.

Leicester, as it seemed to him, had reason to be angry with his lady for transgressing his commands, and thus placing him in the perilous situation in which he had that morning stood. But what displeasure could keep its ground before these testimonies of affection from a being so lovely that even the negligence of dress, and the withering effects of fear, grief, and fatigue, which would have impaired the beauty of others, rendered hers but the more interesting! He received and repaid her caresses with fondness, mingled with melancholy, the last of which she seemed scarcely to observe, until the first transport of her own joy was over, when, looking anxiously in his face, she asked if he was ill.

'Not in my body, Amy,' was his answer.

'Then I will be well too. O Dudley! I have been ill! — very ill, since we last met! — for I call not this morning's horrible vision a meeting. I have been in sickness, in grief, and in danger. But thou art come, and all is joy, and health, and safety!'

'Alas! Amy,' said Leicester, 'thou hast undone me!'

'I, my lord!' said Amy, her cheek at once losing its transient flush of joy, 'how could I injure that which I love better than myself?'

share your fortunes, when, holding that high character, I had strolled the country the acknowledged wife of such a profligate fellow as your servant Varney ?'

'My lord,' said Varney, interposing, 'my lady is too much prejudiced against me, unhappily, to listen to what I can offer, yet it may please her better than what she proposes. She has good interest with Master Edmund Tressilian, and could doubtless prevail on him to consent to be her companion to Lidcote Hall, and there she might remain in safety until time permitted the development of this mystery.'

Leicester was silent, but stood looking eagerly on Amy, with eyes which seemed suddenly to glow as much with suspicion as with pleasure.

The countess only said, 'Would to God I were in my father's house ! When I left it, I little thought I was leaving peace of mind and honour behind me.'

Varney proceeded with a tone of deliberation. 'Doubtless this will make it necessary to take strangers into my lord's counsels, but surely the countess will be warrant for the honour of Master Tressilian and such of her father's family——'

'Peace, Varney,' said Leicester, 'by Heaven I will strike my dagger into thee, if again thou namest Tressilian as a partner of my counsels !'

'And wherefore not ?' said the countess, 'unless they be counsels fitter for such as Varney than for a man of stainless honour and integrity. My lord——my lord, bend no angry brows on me, it is the truth, and it is I who speak it. I once did Tressilian wrong for your sake, I will not do him the further injustice of being silent when his honour is brought in question. I can forbear,' she said, looking at Varney, 'to pull the mask off hypocrisy, but I will not permit virtue to be slandered in my hearing.'

There was a dead pause. Leicester stood displeased, yet undetermined, and too conscious of the weakness of his cause, while Varney, with a deep and hypocritical affectation of sorrow, mingled with humility, bent his eyes on the ground.

It was then that the Countess Amy displayed, in the midst of distress and difficulty, the natural energy of character which would have rendered her, had fate allowed, a distinguished ornament of the rank which she held. She walked up to Leicester with a composed step, a dignified air, and looks in which strong affection essayed in vain to shake the firmness of conscious truth and rectitude of principle. 'You have spoke

your mind, my lord,' she said, 'in these difficulties, with which, unhappily, I have found myself unable to comply. This gentleman — this person, I would say — has hinted at another scheme, to which I object not but as it displeases you. Will your lordship be pleased to hear what a young and timid woman, but your most affectionate wife, can suggest in the present extremity?'

Leicester was silent, but bent his head towards the countess, as an intimation that she was at liberty to proceed.

'There hath been but one cause for all these evils, my lord,' she proceeded, 'and it resolves itself into the mysterious duplicity with which you have been induced to surround yourself. Extricate yourself at once, my lord, from the tyranny of these disgraceful trammels. Be like a true English gentleman, knight, and earl, who holds that truth is the foundation of honour, and that honour is dear to him as the breath of his nostrils. Take your ill-fated wife by the hand, lead her to the footstool of Elizabeth's throne, say that, "In a moment of infatuation, moved by supposed beauty, of which none perhaps can now trace even the remains, I gave my hand to this Amy Robsart." You will then have done justice to me, my lord, and to your own honour, and should law or power require you to part from me, I will oppose no objection, since I may then with honour hide a grieved and broken heart in those shades from which your love withdrew me. Then — have but a little patience, and Amy's life will not long darken your brighter prospects.'

There was so much of dignity, so much of tenderness, in the countess's remonstrance that it moved all that was noble and generous in the soul of her husband. The scales seemed to fall from his eyes, and the duplicity and tergiversation of which he had been guilty stung him at once with remorse and shame.

'I am not worthy of you, Amy,' he said, 'that could weigh aught which ambition has to give against such a heart as thine! I have a bitter penance to perform, in disentangling, before sneering foes and astounded friends, all the meshes of my own deceitful policy. And the Queen — but let her take my head, as she has threatened.'

'Your head, my lord!' said the countess, 'because you used the freedom and liberty of an English subject in choosing a wife? For shame, it is this distrust of the Queen's justice, this apprehension of danger, which cannot but be imaginary, that, like scarecrows, have induced you to forsake the straight forward path, which, as it is the best, is also the safest.'

'Ah, Amy, thou little knowest!' said Dudley, but, instantly checking himself, he added, 'Yet she shall not find in me a safe or easy victim of arbitrary vengeance. I have friends — I have allies — I will not, like Norfolk, be dragged to the block as a victim to sacrifice. Fear not, Amy, thou shalt see Dudley bear himself worthy of his name. I must instantly communicate with some of those friends on whom I can best rely, for, as things stand, I may be made prisoner in my own castle.'

'Oh, my good lord,' said Amy, 'make no faction in a peaceful state! There is no friend can help us so well as our own candid truth and honour. Bring but these to our assistance, and you are safe amidst a whole army of the envious and malignant. Leave these behind you, and all other defence will be fruitless. Truth, my noble lord, is well painted unarmed.'

'But wisdom, Amy,' answered Leicester, 'is arrayed in panoply of proof. Argue not with me on the means I shall use to render my confession — since it must be called so — as safe as may be, it will be fraught with enough of danger, do what we will. Varney, we must hence. Farewell, Amy, whom I am to vindicate as mine own at an expense and risk of which thou alone couldst be worthy! You shall soon hear farther from me.'

He embraced her fervently, muffled himself as before, and accompanied Varney from the apartment. The latter, as he left the room, bowed low, and, as he raised his body, regarded Amy with a peculiar expression, as if he desired to know how far his own pardon was included in the reconciliation which had taken place betwixt her and her lord. The countess looked upon him with a fixed eye, but seemed no more conscious of his presence than if there had been nothing but vacant air on the spot where he stood.

'She has brought me to the crisis,' he muttered. 'She or I are lost. There was something — I wot not if it was fear or pity — that prompted me to avoid this fatal crisis. It is now decided. She or I must *perish*.'

While he thus spoke, he observed, with surprise, that a boy, repulsed by the sentinel, made up to Leicester and spoke with him. Varney was one of those politicians whom not the slightest appearances escape without inquiry. He asked the sentinel what the lad wanted with him, and received for answer, that the boy had wished him to transmit a parcel to the mad lady, but that he cared not to take charge of it, such com-

munication being beyond his commission. His curiosity satisfied in that particular, he approached his patron, and heard him say, 'Well, boy, the packet shall be delivered.'

'Thanks, good Master Serving man,' said the boy, and was out of sight in an instant

Leicester and Varney returned with hasty steps to the earl's private apartment by the same passage which had conducted them to Saintlowe's Tower

CHAPTER XXXVI

I have said
This is an adulteress, I have said with whom —
More, she's a traitor, and Camillo is
A federy with her, and one that knows
What she should shame to know herself.

Winter's Tale.

THEY were no sooner in the earl's cabinet than, taking his tablets from his pocket, he began to write, speaking partly to Varney and partly to himself 'There are many of them close bounden to me, and especially those in good estate and high office, many who, if they look back towards my benefits, or forward towards the perils which may befall themselves, will not, I think, be disposed to see me stagger unsupported Let me see — Knollis is sure, and through his means Guernsey and Jersey Horsey commands in the Isle of Wight My brother-in-law, Huntingdon, and Pembroke have authority in Wales Through Bedford I lead the Puritans, with their interest, so powerful in all the boroughs My brother of Warwick is equal, wellnigh, to myself in wealth, followers, and dependencies Sir Owen Hopton is at my devotion, he commands the Tower of London, and the national treasure deposited there My father and grandfather needed never to have stooped their heads to the block had they thus forecast their enterprises Why look you so sad, Varney? I tell thee, a tree so deep-rooted is not easily to be torn up by the tempest'

'Alas! my lord,' said Varney, with well-acted passion, and then resumed the same look of despondency which Leicester had before noted.

'Alas!' repeated Leicester, 'and wherefore alas, Sir Richard? Doth your new spirit of chivalry supply no more vigorous ejaculation when a noble struggle is impending? Or, if "alas" means thou wilt flinch from the conflict, thou mayest leave the castle, or go join mine enemies, whichever thou thinkest best'

'Not so, my lord,' answered his confidant, 'Varney will be found fighting or dying by your side. Forgive me it, in love to you, I see more fully than your noble heart permits you to do the inextricable difficulties with which you are surrounded. You are strong, my lord, and powerful, yet, let me say it without offence, you are so only by the reflected light of the Queen's favour. While you are Elizabeth's favourite you are all, save in name, like an actual sovereign. But let her call back the honours she has bestowed, and the prophet's gourd did not wither more suddenly. Declare against the Queen, and I do not say that in the wide nation, or in this province alone, you would find yourself instantly deserted and outnumbered, but I will say, that even in this very castle, and in the midst of your vassals, kinsmen, and dependants, you would be a captive, nay, a sentenced captive, should she please to say the word. Think upon Norfolk, my lord — upon the powerful Northumberland — the splendid Westmoreland — think on all who have made head against this sage princess. They are dead, captive, or fugitive. This is not like other thrones, which can be overturned by a combination of powerful nobles: the broad foundations which support it are in the extended love and affections of the people. You might share it with Elizabeth if you would, but neither yours nor any other power, foreign or domestic, will avail to overthrow or even to shake it.'

He paused, and Leicester threw his tablets from him with an air of reckless despatch. 'It may be as thou sayest,' he said, 'and, in sooth, I care not whether truth or cowardice dictate thy forebodings. But it shall not be said I fell without a struggle. Give orders that those of my retainers who served under me in Ireland be gradually drawn into the main keep, and let our gentlemen and friends stand on their guard, and go armed, as if they expected an onset from the followers of Sussex. Possess the townspeople with some apprehension, let them take arms and be ready, at a given signal, to overpower the pensioners and yeomen of the guard.'

'Let me remind you, my lord,' said Varney, with the same appearance of deep and melancholy interest, 'that you have given me orders to prepare for disarming the Queen's guard. It is an act of high treason, but you shall nevertheless be obeyed.'

'I care not,' said Leicester, desperately — 'I care not. Shame is behind me, ruin before me, I must on.'

Here there was another pause, which Varney at length broke with the following words — 'It is come to the point I have long dreaded. I must either witness, like an ungrateful beast, the downfall of the best and kindest of masters, or I must speak what I would have buried in the deepest oblivion, or told by any other mouth than mine.'

'What is that thou sayest, or wouldst say?' replied the earl, 'we have no time to waste on words, when the times call us to action.'

'My speech is soon made, my lord — would to God it were as soon answered! Your marriage is the sole cause of the threatened breach with your sovereign, my lord, is it not?'

'Thou knowest it is!' replied Leicester. 'What needs so fruitless a question?'

'Pardon me, my lord,' said Varney, 'the use lies here. Men will wager their lands and lives in defence of a rich diamond, my lord, but were it not first prudent to look if there is no flaw in it?'

'What means this?' said Leicester, with eyes sternly fixed on his dependant. 'of whom dost thou dare to speak?'

'It is — of the Countess Amy, my lord, of whom I am unhappily bound to speak, and of whom I *will* speak, were your lordship to kill me for my zeal.'

'Thou mayest happen to deserve it at my hand,' said the earl. 'but speak on, I will hear thee.'

'Nay, then, my lord, I will be bold. I speak for my own life as well as for your lordship's. I like not this lady's tampering and trickstering with this same Edmund Tressilian. You know him, my lord. You know he had formerly an interest in her, which it cost your lordship some pains to supersede. You know the eagerness with which he has pressed on the suit against me in behalf of this lady, the open object of which is to drive your lordship to an avowal of what I must ever call your most unhappy marriage, the point to which my lady also is willing, at any risk, to urge you.'

Leicester smiled constrainedly. 'Thou meanest well, good Sir Richard, and wouldst, I think, sacrifice thine own honour, as well as that of any other person, to save me from what thou think'st a step so terrible. But, remember' — he spoke these words with the most stern decision — 'you speak of the Countess of Leicester.'

'I do, my lord,' said Varney, 'but it is for the welfare of the Earl of Leicester. My tale is but begun. I do most strongly

believe that this Tressilian has, from the beginning of his moving in her cause, been in connivance with her ladyship the countess’

‘Thou speak’st wild madness, Varney, with the sober face of a preacher Where or how could they communicate together?’

‘My lord,’ said Varney, ‘unfortunately I can show that but too well. It was just before the supplication was presented to the Queen, in Tressilian’s name, that I met him, to my utter astonishment, at the postern gate which leads from the demesne at Cumnor Place’

‘Thou met’st him, villain! and why didst thou not strike him dead?’ exclaimed Leicester

‘I drew on him, my lord, and he on me, and had not my foot slipped, he would not, perhaps, have been again a stumbling block in your lordship’s path.’

Leicester seemed struck dumb with surprise. At length he answered, ‘What other evidence hast thou of this, Varney, save thine own assertion? for, as I will punish deeply, I will examine coolly and warily Sacred Heaven! but no—I will examine coldly and warily—coldly and warily’ He repeated these words more than once to himself, as if in the very sound there was a sedative quality, and again compressing his lips, as if he feared some violent expression might escape from them, he asked again, ‘What farther proof?’

‘Enough, my lord,’ said Varney, ‘and to spare I would it rested with me alone, for with me it might have been silenced for ever But my servant, Michael Lambourne, witnessed the whole, and was, indeed, the means of first introducing Tressilian into Cumnor Place, and therefore I took him into my service, and retained him in it, though something of a debauched fellow, that I might have his tongue always under my own command.’ He then acquainted Lord Leicester how easy it was to prove the circumstance of their interview true, by evidence of Anthony Foster, with the corroborative testimonies of the various persons at Cumnor, who had heard the wager laid, and had seen Lambourne and Tressilian set off together In the whole narrative, Varney hazarded nothing fabulous, excepting that, not indeed by direct assertion, but by inference, he led his patron to suppose that the interview betwixt Amy and Tressilian at Cumnor Place had been longer than the few minutes to which it was in reality limited.

‘And wherefore was I not told of all this?’ said Leicester,

sternly 'Why did all of ye — and in particular thou, Varney — keep back from me such material information?'

'Because, my lord,' replied Varney, 'the countess pretended to Foster and to me that Tressilian had intruded himself upon her, and I concluded their interview had been in all honour, and that she would at her own time tell it to your lordship. Your lordship knows with what unwilling ears we listen to evil surmises against those whom we love, and I thank Heaven I am no make-bate or informer, to be the first to sow them'

'You are but too ready to receive them, however, Sir Richard,' replied his patron 'How knowest thou that this interview was not in all honour, as thou hast said? Methinks the wife of the Earl of Leicester might speak for a short time with such a person as Tressilian without injury to me or suspicion to herself'

'Questionless, my lord,' answered Varney, 'had I thought otherwise, I had been no keeper of the secret. But here lies the rub — Tressilian leaves not the place without establishing a correspondence with a poor man, the landlord of an inn in Cumnor, for the purpose of carrying off the lady. He sent down an emissary of his, whom I trust soon to have in right sure keeping under Mervyn's Tower Killigrew and Lambsbey are scouring the country in quest of him The host is rewarded with a ring for keeping counsel, your lordship may have noted it on Tressilian's hand — here it is. This fellow, this agent makes his way to the Place as a pedlar, holds conferences with the lady, and they make their escape together by night, rob a poor fellow of a horse by the way, such was their guilty haste, and at length reach this castle, where the Countess of Leicester finds refuge — I dare not say in what place'

'Speak, I command thee,' said Leicester — 'speak, while I retain sense enough to hear thee.'

'Since it must be so,' answered Varney, 'the lady resorted immediately to the apartment of Tressilian, where she remained many hours, partly in company with him and partly alone I told you Tressilian had a paramour in his chamber, I little dreamed that paramour was ——'

'Amy, thou wouldst say,' answered Leicester, 'but it is false — false as the smoke of hell! Ambitious she may be — fickle and impatient — 't is a woman's fault, but false to me! never, never. The proof — the proof of this!' he exclaimed, hastily.

'Carrol, the deputy-marshal, ushered her thither by her own desire on yesterday afternoon, Lambourne and the warder both found her there at an early hour this morning.'

'Was Tressilian there with her?' said Leicester in the same hurried tone.

'No, my lord. You may remember,' answered Varney, 'that he was that night placed with Sir Nicholas Blount, under a species of arrest.'

'Did Carrol, or the other fellows, know who she was?' demanded Leicester.

'No, my lord,' replied Varney. 'Carrol and the warder had never seen the countess, and Lambourne knew her not in her disguise, but, in seeking to prevent her leaving the cell, he obtained possession of one of her gloves, which, I think, your lordship may know.'

He gave the glove, which had the bear and ragged staff, the earl's impress, embroidered upon it in seed-pearls.

'I do—I do recognise it,' said Leicester. 'They were my own gift. The fellow of it was on the arm which she threw this very day around my neck!' He spoke this with violent agitation.

'Your lordship,' said Varney, 'might yet further inquire of the lady herself respecting the truth of these passages.'

'It needs not—it needs not,' said the tortured earl. 'it is written in characters of burning light, as if they were branded on my very eyeballs! I see her infamy—I can see nought else, and—gracious Heaven!—for this vile woman was I about to commit to danger the lives of so many noble friends—shake the foundation of a lawful throne—carry the sword and torch through the bosom of a peaceful land—wrong the kind mistress who made me what I am, and would, but for that hell-framed marriage, have made me all that man can be! All this I was ready to do for a woman who trinkets and traffics with my worst foes! And thou, villain, why didst thou not speak sooner?'

'My lord,' said Varney, 'a tear from my lady would have blotted out all I could have said. Besides, I had not these proofs until this very morning, when Anthony Foster's sudden arrival, with the examinations and declarations which he had extorted from the innkeeper Gosling and others, explained the manner of her flight from Cumnor Place, and my own researches discovered the steps which she had taken here.'

'Now, may God be praised for the light He has given! so

full, so satisfactory, that there breathes not a man in England who shall call my proceeding rash or my revenge unjust. And yet, Varney, so young, so fair, so fawning, and so false! Hence, then, her hatred to thee, my trusty, my well-beloved servant, because you withstood her plots and endangered her paramour's life!

'I never gave her any other cause of dislike, my lord,' replied Varney, 'but she knew that my counsels went directly to diminish her influence with your lordship, and that I was, and have been, ever ready to peril my life against your enemies.'

'It is too, too apparent,' replied Leicester, 'yet, with what an air of magnanimity she exhorted me to commit my head to the Queen's mercy rather than wear the veil of falsehood a moment longer! Methinks the angel of truth himself can have no such tones of high-souled impulse. Can it be so, Varney? Can falsehood use thus boldly the language of truth? Can infamy thus assume the guise of purity? Varney, thou hast been my servant from a child, I have raised thee high — can raise thee higher. Think — think for me! Thy brain was ever shrewd and piercing. May she not be innocent? Prove her so, and all I have yet done for thee shall be as nothing — nothing — in comparison of thy recompense!'

The agony with which his master spoke had some effect even on the hardened Varney, who, in the midst of his own wicked and ambitious designs, really loved his patron as well as such a wretch was capable of loving anything, but he comforted himself, and subdued his self-reproaches, with the reflection that, if he inflicted upon the earl some immediate and transitory pain, it was in order to pave his way to the throne, which, were this marriage dissolved by death or otherwise, he deemed Elizabeth would willingly share with his benefactor. He therefore persevered in his diabolical policy, and, after a moment's consideration, answered the anxious queries of the earl with a melancholy look, as if he had in vain sought some exculpation for the countess, then suddenly raising his head, he said, with an expression of hope, which instantly communicated itself to the countenance of his patron — 'Yet wherefore, if guilty, should she have perilled herself by coming hither? Why not rather have fled to her father's or elsewhere? — though that, indeed, might have interfered with her desire to be acknowledged as Countess of Leicester.'

'True — true — true!' exclaimed Leicester, his transient gleam of hope giving way to the utmost bitterness of feeling and

expression, 'thou art not fit to fathom a woman's depth of wit, Varney I see it all. She would not quit the estate and title of the wittol who had wedded her. Ay, and if in my madness I had started into rebellion, or if the angry Queen had taken my head, as she this morning threatened, the wealthy dower which law would have assigned to the Countess Dowager of Leicester had been no bad windfall to the beggarly 'Tressilian. Well might she goad me on to danger, which could not end otherwise than profitably to her. Speak not for her, Varney, I will have her blood!'

'My lord,' replied Varney, 'the wildness of your distress breaks forth in the wildness of your language.'

'I say, speak not for her,' replied Leicester, 'she has dishonoured me — she would have murdered me, all ties are burst between us. She shall die the death of a traitress and adulteress, well merited both by the laws of God and man! And — what is this casket,' he said, 'which was even now thrust into my hand by a boy, with the desire I would convey it to 'Tressilian, as he could not give it to the countess? By Heaven! the words surprised me as he spoke them, though other matters chased them from my brain, but now they return with double force. It is her casket of jewels! Force it open, Varney — force the hinges open with thy poniard.'

'She refused the aid of my dagger once,' thought Varney, as he unsheathed the weapon, 'to cut the string which bound a letter, but now it shall work a mightier ministry in her fortunes.'

With this reflection, by using the three cornered stiletto-blade as a wedge, he forced open the slender silver hinges of the casket. The Earl no sooner saw them give way than he snatched the casket from Sir Richard's hand, wrenched off the cover, and tearing out the splendid contents, flung them on the floor in a transport of rage, while he eagerly searched for some letter or billet which should make the fancied guilt of his innocent countess yet more apparent. Then stamping furiously on the gems, he exclaimed, 'Thus I annihilate the miserable toys for which thou hast sold thyself, body and soul, consigned thyself to an early and timeless death, and me to misery and remorse for ever! Tell me not of forgiveness, Varney. She is doomed!'

So saying, he left the room, and rushed into an adjacent closet, the door of which he locked and bolted.

Varney looked after him, while something of a more human feeling seemed to contend with his habitual sneer. 'I am sorry

for his weakness,' he said, 'but love has made him a child. He throws down and treads on these costly toys, with the same vehemence would he dash to pieces this fairest toy of all, of which he used to rave so fondly. But that taste also will be forgotten when its object is no more. Well, he has no eye to value things as they deserve, and that nature has given to Varney. When Leicester shall be a sovereign, he will think as little of the gales of passion through which he gained that royal port as ever did sailor in harbour of the perils of a voyage. But these tell-tale articles must not remain here; they are rather too rich vails for the diudges who dress the chamber.'

While Varney was employed in gathering together and putting them into a secret drawer of a cabinet that chanced to be unlocked, he saw the door of Leicester's closet open, the tapestry pushed aside, and the earl's face thrust out, but with eyes so dead, and lips and cheeks so bloodless and pale, that he started at the sudden change. No sooner did his eyes encounter the earl's than the latter withdrew his head and shut the door of the closet. This manœuvre Leicester repeated twice, without speaking a word, so that Varney began to doubt whether his brain was not actually affected by his mental agony. The third time, however, he beckoned, and Varney obeyed the signal. When he entered, he soon found his patron's perturbation was not caused by insanity, but by the fellness of purpose which he entertained contending with various contrary passions. They passed a full hour in close consultation, after which the Earl of Leicester, with an incredible exertion, dressed himself and went to attend his royal guest.

CHAPTER XXXVII

You have displaced the mirth, broke the good meeting
With most admired disorder

Macbeth

IT was afterwards remembered that, during the banquets and revels which occupied the remainder of this eventful day, the bearing of Leicester and of Varney were totally different from their usual demeanour. Sir Richard Varney had been held rather a man of counsel and of action than a votary of pleasure. Business, whether civil or military, seemed always to be his proper sphere, and while in festivals and revels, although he well understood how to trick them up and present them, his own part was that of a mere spectator, or, if he exercised his wit, it was in a rough, caustic, and severe manner, rather as if he scoffed at the exhibition and the guests than shared the common pleasure.

But upon the present day his character seemed changed. He mixed among the younger courtiers and ladies, and appeared for the moment to be actuated by a spirit of light-hearted gaiety which rendered him a match for the liveliest. Those who had looked upon him as a man given up to graver and more ambitious pursuits, a bitter sneerer and passer of sarcasms at the expense of those who, taking life as they find it, were disposed to snatch at each pastime it presents, now perceived with astonishment that his wit could carry as smooth an edge as their own, his laugh be as lively, and his brow as unclouded. By what art of damnable hypocrisy he could draw this veil of gaiety over the black thoughts of one of the worst of human bosoms must remain unintelligible to all but his compeers, if any such ever existed, but he was a man of extraordinary powers, and those powers were unhappily dedicated in all their energy to the very worst of purposes.

It was entirely different with Leicester. However habituated his mind usually was to play the part of a good courtier, and

appear gay, assiduous, and free from all care but that of enhancing the pleasure of the moment, while his bosom internally throbbed with the pangs of unsatisfied ambition, jealousy, or resentment, his heart had now a yet more dreadful guest, whose workings could not be overshadowed or suppressed, and you might read in his vacant eye and troubled brow that his thoughts were far absent from the scenes in which he was compelling himself to play a part. He looked, moved, and spoke as if by a succession of continued efforts, and it seemed as if his will had in some degree lost the promptitude of command over the acute mind and goodly form of which it was the regent. His actions and gestures, instead of appearing the consequence of simple volition, seemed, like those of an automaton, to wait the revolution of some internal machinery ere they could be performed, and his words fell from him piecemeal, interrupted, as if he had first to think what he was to say, then how it was to be said, and as if, after all, it was only by an effort of continued attention that he completed a sentence without forgetting both the one and the other.

The singular effects which these distractions of mind produced upon the behaviour and conversation of the most accomplished courtier of England, as they were visible to the lowest and dullest menial who approached his person, could not escape the notice of the most intelligent princess of the age. Nor is there the least doubt that the alternate negligence and irregularity of his manner would have called down Elizabeth's severe displeasure on the Earl of Leicester, had it not occurred to her to account for it by supposing that the apprehension of that displeasure which she had expressed towards him with such vivacity that very morning was dwelling upon the spirits of her favourite, and, spite of his efforts to the contrary, distracted the usual graceful tenor of his mien and the charms of his conversation. When this idea, so flattering to female vanity, had once obtained possession of her mind, it proved a full and satisfactory apology for the numerous errors and mistakes of the Earl of Leicester, and the watchful circle around observed with astonishment that, instead of resenting his repeated negligence and want of even ordinary attention, although these were points on which she was usually extremely punctilious, the Queen sought, on the contrary, to afford him time and means to recollect himself, and deigned to assist him in doing so, with an indulgence which seemed altogether inconsistent with her usual character. It was clear, however, that

this could not last much longer, and that Elizabeth must finally put another and more severe construction on Leicester's uncourteous conduct, when the earl was summoned by Varney to speak with him in a different apartment.

After having had the message twice delivered to him, he rose, and was about to withdraw, as it were, by instinct, then stopped, and, turning round, entreated permission of the Queen to absent himself for a brief space upon matters of pressing importance.

'Go, my lord,' said the Queen, 'we are aware our presence must occasion sudden and unexpected occurrences, which require to be provided for on the instant. Yet, my lord, as you would have us believe ourself your welcome and honoured guest, we entreat you to think less of our good cheer, and favour us with more of your good countenance than we have this day enjoyed, for, whether prince or peasant be the guest, the welcome of the host will always be the better part of the entertainment. Go, my lord, and we trust to see you return with an unwrinkled brow and those free thoughts which you are wont to have at the disposal of your friends.'

Leicester only bowed low in answer to this rebuke, and retired. At the door of the apartment he was met by Varney, who eagerly drew him apart, and whispered in his ear, 'All is well!'

'Has Masters seen her?' said the earl.

'He has, my lord, and as she would neither answer his queries nor allege any reason for her refusal, he will give full testimony that she labours under a mental disorder, and may be best committed to the charge of her friends. The opportunity is therefore free to remove her as we proposed.'

'But Tressilian?' said Leicester.

'He will not know of her departure for some time,' replied Varney, 'it shall take place this very evening, and to-morrow he shall be cared for.'

'No, by my soul,' answered Leicester, 'I will take vengeance on him with mine own hand!'

'You, my lord, and on so inconsiderable a man as Tressilian! No, my lord, he hath long wished to visit foreign parts. Trust him to me. I will take care he returns not hither to tell tales.'

'Not so, by Heaven, Varney!' exclaimed Leicester. 'Inconsiderable do you call an enemy that hath had power to wound me so deeply that my whole after life must be one scene of

remorse and misery? No, rather than forego the right of doing myself justice with my hand on that accursed villain, I will unfold the whole truth at Elizabeth's footstool, and let her vengeance descend at once on them and on myself.'

Varney saw with great alarm that his lord was wrought up to such a pitch of agitation that, if he gave not way to him, he was perfectly capable of adopting the desperate resolution which he had announced, and which was instant ruin to all the schemes of ambition which Varney had formed for his patron and for himself. But the earl's rage seemed at once uncontrollable and deeply concentrated, and while he spoke his eyes shot fire, his voice trembled with excess of passion, and the light foam stood on his lip.

His confidant made a bold and successful effort to obtain the mastery of him even in this hour of emotion. 'My lord,' he said, leading him to a mirror, 'behold your reflection in that glass, and think if these agitated features belong to one who, in a condition so extreme, is capable of forming a resolution for himself.'

'What, then, wouldst thou make me?' said Leicester, struck at the change in his own physiognomy, though offended at the freedom with which Varney made the appeal. 'Am I to be thy ward, thy vassal — the property and subject of my servant?'

'No, my lord,' said Varney, firmly, 'but be master of yourself and of your own passion. My lord, I, your born servant, am ashamed to see how poorly you bear yourself in the storm of fury. Go to Elizabeth's feet, confess your marriage, impeach your wife and her paramour of adultery, and avow yourself, amongst all your peers, the wittol who married a country girl, and was cozened by her and her book-learned gallant. Go, my lord, but first take farewell of Richard Varney, with all the benefits you ever conferred on him. He served the noble, the lofty, the high-minded Leicester, and was more proud of depending on him than he would be of commanding thousands. But the abject lord who stoops to every adverse circumstance, whose judicious resolves are scattered like chaff before every wind of passion, him Richard Varney serves not. He is as much above him in constancy of mind as beneath him in rank and fortune.'

Varney spoke thus without hypocrisy, for, though the firmness of mind which he boasted was hardness and impenetrability, yet he really felt the ascendancy which he vaunted,

while the interest which he actually felt in the fortunes of Leicester gave unusual emotion to his voice and manner

Leicester was overpowered by his assumed superiority, it seemed to the unfortunate earl as if his last friend was about to abandon him. He stretched his hand towards Varney as he uttered the words, 'Do not leave me. What wouldst thou have me do?'

'Be thyself, my noble master,' said Varney, touching the earl's hand with his lips, after having respectfully grasped it in his own — 'be yourself, superior to those storms of passion which wreck inferior minds. Are you the first who has been cozened in love? The first whom a vain and licentious woman has cheated into an affection which she has afterwards scorned and misused? And will you suffer yourself to be driven frantic, because you have not been wiser than the wisest men whom the world has seen? Let her be as if she had not been — let her pass from your memory as unworthy of ever having held a place there. Let your strong resolve of this morning, which I have both courage, zeal, and means enough to execute, be like the fiat of a superior being, a passionless act of justice. She hath deserved death — let her die!'

While he was speaking, the earl held his hand fast, compressed his lips hard, and frowned, as if he laboured to catch from Varney a portion of the cold, ruthless, and dispassionate firmness which he recommended. When he was silent, the earl still continued to grasp his hand, until, with an effort at calm decision, he was able to articulate, 'Be it so — she dies! But one tear might be permitted.'

'Not one, my lord,' interrupted Varney, who saw by the quivering eye and convulsed cheek of his patron that he was about to give way to a burst of emotion, 'not a tear — the time permits it not. Tressilian must be thought of —'

'That indeed is a name,' said the earl, 'to convert tears into blood. Varney, I have thought on this, and I have determined — neither entreaty nor argument shall move me — Tressilian shall be my own victim.'

'It is madness, my lord, but you are too mighty for me to bar your way to your revenge. Yet resolve at least to choose fitting time and opportunity, and to forbear him until these shall be found'

'Thou shalt order me in what thou wilt,' said Leicester, 'only thwart me not in this.'

'Then, my lord,' said Varney, 'I first request of you to lay

aside the wild, suspected, and half-frenzied demeanour which hath this day drawn the eyes of all the court upon you, and which, but for the Queen's partial indulgence, which she hath extended towards you in a degree far beyond her nature, she had never given you the opportunity to atone for'

'Have I indeed been so negligent?' said Leicester, as one who awakes from a dream 'I thought I had coloured it well, but fear nothing, my mind is now eased—I am calm My horoscope shall be fulfilled, and that it may be fulfilled, I will tax to the highest every faculty of my mind Fear me not, I say I will to the Queen instantly, not thine own looks and language shall be more impenetrable than mine Hast thou aught else to say?'

'I must crave your signet-ring,' said Varney, gravely, 'in token to those of your servants whom I must employ that I possess your full authority in commanding their aid'

Leicester drew off the signet-ring which he commonly used and gave it to Varney with a haggard and stern expression of countenance, adding only, in a low, half-whispered tone, but with terrific emphasis, the words, 'What thou dost, do quickly'

Some anxiety and wonder took place, meanwhile, in the presence-hall at the prolonged absence of the noble lord of the castle, and great was the delight of his friends when they saw him enter as a man from whose bosom, to all human seeming, a weight of care had been just removed Amply did Leicester that day redeem the pledge he had given to Varney, who soon saw himself no longer under the necessity of maintaining a character so different from his own as that which he had assumed in the earlier part of the day, and gradually relapsed into the same grave, shrewd, caustic, observer of conversation and incident which constituted his usual part in society

With Elizabeth, Leicester played his game as one to whom her natural strength of talent, and her weakness in one or two particular points, were well known He was too wary to exchange on a sudden the sullen personage which he had played before he retired with Varney, but, on approaching her, it seemed softened into a melancholy, which had a touch of tenderness in it, and which, in the course of conversing with Elizabeth, and as she dropped in compassion one mark of favour after another to console him, passed into a flow of affectionate gallantry the most assiduous, the most delicate, the most insinuating, yet at the same time the most respect-

ful, with which a queen was ever addressed by a subject Elizabeth listened as in a sort of enchantment, her jealousy of power was lulled asleep, her resolution to forsake all social or domestic ties, and dedicate herself exclusively to the care of her people, began to be shaken, and once more the star of Dudley culminated in the court horizon.

But Leicester did not enjoy this triumph over nature and over conscience without its being embittered to him, not only by the internal rebellion of his feelings against the violence which he exercised over them, but by many accidental circumstances, which, in the course of the banquet, and during the subsequent amusements of the evening, jarred upon that nerve the least vibration of which was agony.

The courtiers were, for example, in the great hall, after having left the banqueting-room, awaiting the appearance of a splendid masque, which was the expected entertainment of this evening, when the Queen interrupted a wild career of wit which the Earl of Leicester was running against Lord Willoughby, Raleigh, and some other courtiers, by saying, 'We will impeach you of high treason, my lord, if you proceed in this attempt to slay us with laughter. And here comes a thing may make us all grave at his pleasure, our learned physician Masters, with news belike of our poor suppliant, Lady Varney, nay, my lord, we will not have you leave us, for this being a dispute betwixt married persons, we do not hold our own experience deep enough to decide thereon, without good counsel. How now, Masters, what think'st thou of the runaway bride?'

The smile with which Leicester had been speaking when the Queen interrupted him remained arrested on his lips, as if it had been carved there by the chisel of Michael Angelo or of Chantrey, and he listened to the speech of the physician with the same immovable cast of countenance.

'The Lady Varney, gracious sovereign,' said the court physician Masters, 'is sullen, and would hold little conference with me touching the state of her health, talking wildly of being soon to plead her own cause before your own presence, and of answering no meaner person's inquiries.'

'Now, the Heavens forefend!' said the Queen, 'we have already suffered from the misconstructions and broils which seem to follow this poor brain-sick lady wherever she comes. Think you not so, my lord?' she added, appealing to Leicester, with something in her look that indicated regret, even tenderly expressed, for their disagreement of that morning. Leicester

compelled himself to bow low. The utmost force he could exert was inadequate to the farther effort of expressing in words his acquiescence in the Queen's sentiment.

'You are vindictive,' she said, 'my lord, but we will find time and place to punish you. But once more to this same trouble-mirth — this Lady Varney. What of her health, Masters?'

'She is sullen, madam, as I already said,' replied Masters, 'and refuses to answer interrogatories or be amenable to the authority of the mediciner. I conceive her to be possessed with a delirium, which I incline to term rather *hypochondria* than *phrenesis*, and I think she were best cared for by her husband in his own house, and removed from all this bustle of pageants, which disturbs her weak brain with the most fantastic phantoms. She drops hints as if she were some great person in disguise — some countess or princess perchance. God help them, such are often the hallucinations of these infirm persons!'

'Nay, then,' said the Queen, 'away with her with all speed. Let Varney care for her with fitting humanity, but let them rid the castle of her forthwith. She will think herself lady of all, I warrant you. It is pity so fair a form, however, should have an infirm understanding. What think you, my lord?'

'It is pity indeed,' said the earl, repeating the words like a task which was set him.

'But, perhaps,' said Elizabeth, 'you do not join with us in our opinion of her beauty, and indeed we have known men prefer a statelier and more Juno-like form to that drooping, fragile one, that hung its head like a broken lily. Ay, men are tyrants, my lord, who esteem the animation of the strife above the triumph of an unresisting conquest, and, like sturdy champions, love best those women who can wage contest with them. I could think with you, Rutland, that, give my Lord of Leicester such a piece of painted wax for a bride, he would have wished her dead ere the end of the honeymoon.'

As she said this, she looked on Leicester so expressively that, while his heart revolted against the egregious falsehood, he did himself so much violence as to reply in a whisper, that Leicester's love was more lowly than her Majesty deemed, since it was settled where he could never command, but must ever obey.

The Queen blushed, and bid him be silent, yet looked as if she expected that he would not obey her commands. But

at that moment the flourish of trumpets and kettle drums from a high balcony which overlooked the hall announced the entrance of the masquers, and relieved Leicester from the horrible state of constraint and dissimulation in which the result of his own duplicity had placed him

The masque which entered consisted of four separate bands, which followed each other at brief intervals, each consisting of six principal persons and as many torch-bearers, and each representing one of the various nations by which England had at different times been occupied

The aboriginal Britons, who first entered, were ushered in by two ancient Druids, whose hoary hair was crowned with a chaplet of oak, and who bore in their hands branches of mistletoe. The masquers who followed these venerable figures were succeeded by two bards, arrayed in white, and bearing harps, which they occasionally touched, singing at the same time certain stanzas of an ancient hymn to Belus, or the Sun. The aboriginal Britons had been selected from amongst the tallest and most robust young gentlemen in attendance on the court. Their masks were accommodated with long shaggy beards and hair, their vestments were of the hides of wolves and bears, while their legs, arms, and the upper parts of their bodies, being sheathed in flesh coloured silk, on which were traced in grotesque lines representations of the heavenly bodies, and of animals and other terrestrial objects, gave them the lively appearance of our painted ancestors, whose freedom was first treasured upon by the Romans.

The sons of Rome who came to civilise as well as to conquer, were next produced before the princely assembly, and the manager of the revels had correctly imitated the high crest and military habits of that celebrated people, accommodating them with the light yet strong buckler, and the short two edged sword, the use of which had made them victors of the world. The Roman eagles were borne before them by two standard-bearers, who recited a hymn to Mars, and the classical warriors followed with the grave and haughty step of men who aspired at universal conquest.

The third quadrille represented the Saxons, clad in the bearskins which they had brought with them from the German forests, and bearing in their hands the redoubtable battle-axes which made such havoc among the natives of Britain. They were preceded by two scalds, who chanted the praises of Odin.

Last came the knightly Normans, in their mail shirts and

hoods of steel, with all the panoply of chivalry, and marshalled by two minstrels, who sung of war and ladies' love

These four bands entered the spacious hall with the utmost order, a short pause being made that the spectators might satisfy their curiosity as to each quadrille before the appearance of the next. They then marched completely round the hall, in order the more fully to display themselves, regulating their steps to organs, shalms, hautboys, and virginals, the music of the Lord Leicester's household. At length the four quadrilles of masquers, ranging then torch-bearers behind them, drew up in their several ranks on the two opposite sides of the hall, so that the Romans confronting the Britons, and the Saxons the Normans, seemed to look on each other with eyes of wonder, which presently appeared to kindle into anger, expressed by menacing gestures. At the burst of a strain of martial music from the gallery, the masquers drew their swords on all sides, and advanced against each other in the measured steps of a sort of Pyrrhic or military dance, clashing their swords against their adversaries' shields, and clattering them against their blades as they passed each other in the progress of the dance. It was a very pleasant spectacle to see how the various bands, preserving regularity amid motions which seemed to be totally irregular, mixed together, and then disengaging themselves resumed each their own original rank as the music varied.

In this symbolical dance were represented the conflicts which had taken place among the various nations which had anciently inhabited Britain.

At length, after many mazy evolutions, which afforded great pleasure to the spectators, the sound of a loud-voiced trumpet was heard, as if it blew for instant battle or for victory won. The masquers instantly ceased their mimic strife, and collecting themselves under their original leaders, or presenters, for such was the appropriate phrase, seemed to share the anxious expectation which the spectators experienced concerning what was next to appear.

The doors of the hall were thrown wide, and no less a person entered than the fiend-born Merlin, dressed in a strange and mystical attire, suited to his ambiguous birth and magical power. About him and behind him fluttered or gambolled many extraordinary forms, intended to represent the spirits who waited to do his powerful bidding, and so much did this part of the pageant interest the menials and others of the lower class then in the castle, that many of them forgot even the reverence

due to the Queen's presence so far as to thrust themselves into the lower part of the hall.

The Earl of Leicester, seeing his officers had some difficulty to repel these intruders, without more disturbance than was fitting where the Queen was in presence, arose and went himself to the bottom of the hall, Elizabeth, at the same time, with her usual feeling for the common people, requesting that they might be permitted to remain undisturbed to witness the pageant. Leicester went under this pretext, but his real motive was to gain a moment to himself, and to relieve his mind, were it but for one instant, from the dreadful task of hiding, under the guise of gaiety and gallantry, the lacerating pangs of shame, anger, remorse, and thirst for vengeance. He imposed silence by his look and sign upon the vulgar crowd at the lower end of the apartment, but, instead of instantly returning to wait on her Majesty, he wrapped his cloak around him, and mixing with the crowd, stood in some degree an undistinguished spectator of the progress of the masque.

Merlin, having entered and advanced into the midst of the hall, summoned the presenters of the contending bands around him by a wave of his magical rod, and announced to them, in a poetical speech, that the isle of Britain was now commanded by a royal maiden, to whom it was the will of fate that they should all do homage, and request of her to pronounce on the various pretensions which each set forth to be esteemed the pre eminent stock from which the present natives, the happy subjects of that angelical princess, derived their lineage.

In obedience to this mandate, the bands, each moving to solemn music, passed in succession before Elizabeth, doing her, as they passed, each after the fashion of the people whom they represented, the lowest and most devotional homage, which she returned with the same gracious courtesy that had marked her whole conduct since she came to Kenilworth.

The presenters of the several masques, or quadrilles, then alleged, each in behalf of his own troop, the reasons which they had for claiming pre eminence over the rest, and when they had been all heard in turn, she returned them this gracious answer 'That she was sorry she was not better qualified to decide upon the doubtful question which had been propounded to her by the direction of the famous Merlin, but that it seemed to her that no single one of these celebrated nations could claim pre eminence over the others as having most contributed to form the Englishman of her own time, who unquestionably

derived from each of them some worthy attribute of his character 'Thus,' she said, 'the Englishman had from the ancient Briton his bold and tameless spirit of freedom, from the Roman his disciplined courage in war, with his love of letters and civilisation in time of peace, from the Saxon his wise and equitable laws, and from the chivalrous Norman his love of honour and courtesy, with his generous desire for glory'

Merlin answered with readiness, that it did indeed require that so many choice qualities should meet in the English as might render them in some measure the muster of the perfections of other nations, since that alone could render them in some degree deserving of the blessings they enjoyed under the reign of England's Elizabeth.

The music then sounded, and the quadrilles, together with Merlin and his assistants, had begun to remove from the crowded hall, when Leicester, who was, as we have mentioned, stationed for the moment near the bottom of the hall, and consequently engaged in some degree in the crowd, felt himself pulled by the cloak, while a voice whispered in his ear, 'My lord, I do desire some instant conference with you'

CHAPTER XXXVIII

How is 't with me, when every noise appals me ?

Macbeth.

‘ I DESIRE some conference with you ’ The words were simple in themselves, but Lord Leicester was in that alarmed and feverish state of mind when the most ordinary occurrences seem fraught with alarming import, and he turned hastily round to survey the person by whom they had been spoken. There was nothing remarkable in the speaker’s appearance, which consisted of a black silk doublet and short mantle, with a black vizard on his face, for it appeared he had been among the crowd of masks who had thronged into the hall in the retinue of Merlin, though he did not wear any of the extravagant disguises by which most of them were distinguished.

‘ Who are you, or what do you want with me ? ’ said Leicester, not without betraying, by his accents, the hurried state of his spirits.

‘ No evil, my lord, ’ answered the mask, ‘ but much good and honour, if you will rightly understand my purpose. But I must speak with you more privately ’

‘ I can speak with no nameless stranger, ’ answered Leicester, dreading he knew not precisely what from the request of the stranger, ‘ and those who are known to me must seek another and a fitter time to ask an interview ’

He would have hurried away, but the mask still detained him.

‘ Those who talk to your lordship of what your own honour demands have a right over your time, whatever occupations you may lay aside in order to indulge them ’

‘ How ! my honour ! Who dare impeach it ? ’ said Leicester

‘ Your own conduct alone can furnish grounds for accusing it, my lord, and it is that topic on which I would speak with you. ’

'You are insolent,' said Leicester, 'and abuse the hospitable license of the time, which prevents me from having you punished. I demand your name?'

'Edmund Tressilian of Cornwall,' answered the mask 'My tongue has been bound by a promise for four-and-twenty hours, the space is passed—I now speak, and do your lordship the justice to address myself first to you'

The thrill of astonishment which had penetrated to Leicester's very heart at hearing that name pronounced by the voice of the man he most detested, and by whom he conceived himself so deeply injured, at first rendered him immovable, but instantly gave way to such a thirst for revenge as the pilgrim in the desert feels for the water-brooks. He had but sense and self-government enough left to prevent his stabbing to the heart the audacious villain who, after the ruin he had brought upon him, dared, with such unmoved assurance, thus to practise upon him farther. Determined to suppress for the moment every symptom of agitation in order to perceive the full scope of Tressilian's purpose, as well as to secure his own vengeance, he answered in a tone so altered by restrained passion as scarce to be intelligible—'And what does Master Edmund Tressilian require at my hand?'

'Justice, my lord,' answered Tressilian, calmly but firmly

'Justice,' said Leicester, 'all men are entitled to. You, Master Tressilian, are peculiarly so, and be assured you shall have it'

'I expect nothing less from your nobleness,' answered Tressilian, 'but time presses, and I must speak with you to-night. May I wait on you in your chamber?'

'No,' answered Leicester, sternly, 'not under a roof, and that roof mine own. We will meet under the free cope of heaven'

'You are discomposed or displeased, my lord,' replied Tressilian; 'yet there is no occasion for distemperature. The place is equal to me, so you allow me one half-hour of your time uninterrupted.'

'A shorter time will, I trust, suffice,' answered Leicester. 'Meet me in the Pleasance, when the Queen has retired to her chamber'

'Enough,' said Tressilian, and withdrew, while a sort of rapture seemed for the moment to occupy the mind of Leicester

'Heaven,' he said, 'is at last favourable to me, and has put within my reach the wretch who has branded me with this deep ignominy—who has inflicted on me this cruel agony. I will blame fate no more, since I am afforded the means of

tracing the wiles by which he means still farther to practise on me, and then of at once convicting and punishing his villany 'To my task — to my task ! I will not sink under it now, since midnight, at farthest, will bring me vengeance.'

While these reflections thronged through Leicester's mind, he again made his way amid the obsequious crowd, which divided to give him passage, and resumed his place, envied and admired, beside the person of his sovereign. But, could the bosom of him thus admired and envied have been laid open before the inhabitants of that crowded hall, with all its dark thoughts of guilty ambition, blighted affection, deep vengeance, and conscious sense of meditated cruelty crossing each other like spectres in the circle of some foul enchantress, which of them, from the most ambitious noble in the courtly circle down to the most wretched menial who lived by shifting of trenchers, would have desired to change characters with the favourite of Elizabeth and the Lord of Kenilworth !

New tortures awaited him as soon as he had rejoined Elizabeth.

'You come in time, my lord,' she said, 'to decide a dispute between us ladies. Here has Sir Richard Varney asked our permission to depart from the castle with his infirm lady, having, as he tells us, your lordship's consent to his absence, so he can obtain ours. Certes, we have no will to withhold him from the affectionate charge of this poor young person, but you are to know, that Sir Richard Varney hath this day shown himself so much captivated with these ladies of ours, that here is our Duchess of Rutland says, he will carry his poor insane wife no farther than the lake, plunge her in, to tenant the crystal palaces that the enchanted nymph told us of, and return a jolly widower, to dry his tears and to make up the loss among our train. How say you, my lord ? We have seen Varney under two or three different guises, you know what are his proper attributes — think you he is capable of playing his lady such a knave's trick ?'

Leicester was confounded, but the danger was urgent, and a reply absolutely necessary. 'The ladies,' he said, 'think too lightly of one of their own sex in supposing she could deserve such a fate, or too ill of ours, to think it could be inflicted upon an innocent female.'

'Hear him, my ladies,' said Elizabeth, 'like all his sex, he would excuse their cruelty by imputing fickleness to us.'

'Say not *us*, madam,' replied the earl, 'we say that meaner

women, like the lesser lights of heaven, have revolutions and phases, but who shall impute mutability to the sun or to Elizabeth ?'

The discourse presently afterwards assumed a less perilous tendency, and Leicester continued to support his part in it with spirit, at whatever expense of mental agony. So pleasing did it seem to Elizabeth, that the castle bell had sounded midnight ere she retired from the company, a circumstance unusual in her quiet and regular habits of disposing of time. Her departure was, of course, the signal for breaking up the company, who dispersed to their several places of repose, to dream over the pastimes of the day or to anticipate those of the morrow.

The unfortunate lord of the castle, and founder of the proud festival, retired to far different thoughts. His direction to the valet who attended him was to send Varney instantly to his apartment. The messenger returned after some delay, and informed him that an hour had elapsed since Sir Richard Varney had left the castle by the postern gate, with three other persons, one of whom was transported in a horse-litter.

'How came he to leave the castle after the watch was set?' said Leicester. 'I thought he went not till daybreak.'

'He gave satisfactory reasons, as I understand,' said the domestic, 'to the guard, and, as I hear, showed your lordship's signet——'

'True—true,' said the earl, 'yet he has been hasty. Do any of his attendants remain behind?'

'Michael Lambourne, my lord,' said the valet, 'was not to be found when Sir Richard Varney departed, and his master was much incensed at his absence. I saw him but now saddling his horse to gallop after his master.'

'Bid him come hither instantly,' said Leicester, 'I have a message to his master.'

The servant left the apartment, and Leicester traversed it for some time in deep meditation. 'Varney is over zealous,' he said—'over pressing. He loves me, I think, but he hath his own ends to serve, and he is inexorable in pursuit of them. If I rise he rises, and he hath shown himself already but too eager to rid me of this obstacle which seems to stand betwixt me and sovereignty. Yet I will not stoop to bear this disgrace. She shall be punished, but it shall be more advisedly. I already feel, even in anticipation, that over-haste would light the flames of hell in my bosom. No, one victim is enough at once, and that victim already waits me.'

He seized upon writing-materials, and hastily traced these words — ‘Sir Richard Varney, we have resolved to defer the matter entrusted to your care, and strictly command you to proceed no farther in relation to our countess until our further order. We also command your instant return to Kenilworth, as soon as you having safely bestowed that with which you are entrusted. But if the safe placing of your present charge shall detain you longer than we think for, we command you, in that case, to send back our signet-ring by a trusty and speedy messenger, we having present need of the same. And requiring your strict obedience in these things, and commending you to God’s keeping, we rest your assured good friend and master,

‘R. LEICESTER.

‘Given at our Castle of Kenilworth, the tenth of July, in the year of salvation one thousand five hundred and seventy-five’

As Leicester had finished and sealed this mandate, Michael Lambourne, booted up to mid-thigh, having his riding-cloak girthed around him with a broad belt, and a felt cap on his head, like that of a courier, entered his apartment, ushered in by the valet

‘What is thy capacity of service?’ said the earl.

‘Equerry to your lordship’s master of the horse,’ answered Lambourne, with his customary assurance

‘Tie up thy saucy tongue, sir,’ said Leicester, ‘the jests that may suit Sir Richard Varney’s presence suit not mine. How soon wilt thou overtake thy master?’

‘In one hour’s riding, my lord, if man and horse hold good,’ said Lambourne, with an instant alteration of demeanour from an approach to familiarity to the deepest respect. The earl measured him with his eye from top to toe.

‘I have heard of thee,’ he said ‘men say thou art a prompt fellow in thy service, but too much given to brawling and to vassail to be trusted with things of moment.’

‘My lord,’ said Lambourne, ‘I have been soldier, sailor, traveller, and adventurer, and these are all trades in which men enjoy to day because they have no surety of to morrow. But though I may misuse mine own leisure, I have never neglected the duty I owe my master’

‘See that it be so in this instance,’ said Leicester, ‘and it shall do thee good. Deliver this letter speedily and carefully into Sir Richard Varney’s hands.’

‘Does my commission reach no farther?’ said Lambourne

‘No,’ answered Leicester, ‘but it deeply concerns me that it be carefully as well as hastily executed’

‘I will spare neither care nor horse-flesh,’ answered Lambourne, and immediately took his leave

‘So this is the end of my private audience, from which I hoped so much!’ he muttered to himself, as he went through the long gallery and down the back staircase ‘Cog’s bones!’ I thought the earl had wanted a cast of mine office in some secret intrigue, and it all ends in carrying a letter! Well, his pleasure shall be done, however, and, as his lordship well says, it may do me good another time The child must creep ere he walk, and so must your infant courtier I will have a look into this letter, however, which he hath sealed so sloven-like’ Having accomplished this, he clapped his hands together in ecstasy, exclaiming, ‘The countess — the countess! I have the secret that shall make or mar me But come forth, Bayard,’ he added, leading his horse into the courtyard, ‘for your flanks and my spurs must be presently acquainted’

Lambourne mounted accordingly, and left the castle by the postern gate, where his free passage was permitted, in consequence of a message to that effect left by Sir Richard Varney

As soon as Lambourne and the valet had left the apartment, Leicester proceeded to change his dress for a very plain one, threw his mantle around him, and, taking a lamp in his hand, went by the private passage of communication to a small secret postern door which opened into the courtyard, near to the entrance of the Pleasance His reflections were of a more calm and determined character than they had been at any late period, and he endeavoured to claim, even in his own eyes, the character of a man more sinned against than sinning

‘I have suffered the deepest injury,’ such was the tenor of his meditations, ‘yet I have restricted the instant revenge which was in my power, and have limited it to that which is manly and noble But shall the union which this false woman has this day disgraced remain an abiding fetter on me, to check me in the noble career to which my destinies invite me? No — there are other means of disengaging such ties, without unloosing the cords of life In the sight of God, I am no longer bound by the union she has broken Kingdoms shall divide us — oceans roll betwixt us, and their waves, whose abysses have swallowed whole navies, shall be the sole depositaries of the deadly mystery’

By such a train of argument did Leicester labour to reconcile his conscience to the prosecution of plans of vengeance so hastily adopted, and of schemes of ambition which had become so woven in with every purpose and action of his life that he was incapable of the effort of relinquishing them, until his revenge appeared to him to wear a face of justice, and even of generous moderation.

In this mood, the vindictive and ambitious earl entered the superb precincts of the Pleasance, then illumined by the full moon. The broad yellow light was reflected on all sides from the white freestone of which the pavement, balustrades, and architectural ornaments of the place were constructed, and not a single fleecy cloud was visible in the azure sky, so that the scene was nearly as light as if the sun had but just left the horizon. The numerous statues of white marble glimmered in the pale light, like so many sheeted ghosts just arisen from their sepulchres, and the fountains threw their jets into the air, as if they sought that their waters should be brightened by the moonbeams, ere they fell down again upon their basins in showers of sparkling silver. The day had been sultry, and the gentle night breeze, which sighed along the terrace of the Pleasance, raised not a deeper breath than the fan in the hand of youthful beauty. The bird of summer night had built many a nest in the bowers of the adjacent garden, and the tenants now indemnified themselves for silence during the day by a full chorus of their own unrivalled warblings, now joyous, now pathetic, now united, now responsive to each other, as if to express their delight in the placid and delicious scene to which they poured their melody.

Musing on matters far different from the fall of waters, the gleam of moonlight, or the song of the nightingale, the stately Leicester walked slowly from the one end of the terrace to the other, his cloak wrapped around him, and his sword under his arm, without seeing anything resembling the human form.

‘I have been fooled by my own generosity,’ he said, ‘if I have suffered the villain to escape me — ay, and perhaps to go to the rescue of the adulteress, who is so poorly guarded.’

These were his thoughts, which were instantly dispelled when, turning to look back towards the entrance, he saw a human form advancing slowly from the portico, and darkening the various objects with its shadow, as passing them successively, in its approach towards him.

‘Shall I strike ere I again hear his detested voice?’ was

Leicester's thought, as he grasped the hilt of the sword. 'But no! I will see which way his vile practice tends. I will watch, disgusting as it is, the coils and mazes of the loathsome snake, ere I put forth my strength and crush him.'

His hand quitted the sword-hilt, and he advanced slowly towards Tressilian, collecting, for their meeting, all the self-possession he could command, until they came front to front with each other.

Tressilian made a profound reverence, to which the earl replied with a haughty inclination of the head, and the words, 'You sought secret conference with me, sir, I am here, and attentive.'

'My lord,' said Tressilian, 'I am so earnest in that which I have to say, and so desirous to find a patient, nay, a favourable, hearing, that I will stoop to exculpate myself from whatever might prejudice your lordship against me. You think me your enemy?'

'Have I not some apparent cause?' answered Leicester, perceiving that Tressilian paused for a reply.

'You do me wrong, my lord. I am a friend, but neither a dependant nor partizan, of the Earl of Sussex, whom courtiers call your rival, and it is some considerable time since I ceased to regard either courts or court intrigues as suited to my temper or genius.'

'No doubt, sir,' answered Leicester, 'there are other occupations more worthy a scholar, and for such the world holds Master Tressilian love has his intrigues as well as ambition.'

'I perceive, my lord,' replied Tressilian, 'you give much weight to my early attachment for the unfortunate young person of whom I am about to speak, and perhaps think I am prosecuting her cause out of rivalry more than a sense of justice.'

'No matter for my thoughts, sir,' said the earl, 'proceed. You have as yet spoken of yourself only—an important and worthy subject doubtless, but which, perhaps, does not altogether so deeply concern me that I should postpone my repose to hear it. Spare me farther prelude, sir, and speak to the purpose, if indeed you have aught to say that concerns me. When you have done, I, in my turn, have something to communicate.'

'I will speak, then, without farther prelude, my lord,' answered Tressilian, 'having to say that which, as it concerns your lordship's honour, I am confident you will not think your time wasted in listening to. I have to request an account from

your lordship of the unhappy Amy Robsart, whose history is too well known to you. I regret deeply that I did not at once take this course, and make yourself judge between me and the villain by whom she is injured. My lord, she extricated herself from an unlawful and most perilous state of confinement, trusting to the effects of her own remonstrance upon her unworthy husband, and extorted from me a promise that I would not interfere in her behalf until she had used her own efforts to have her rights acknowledged by him.

'Ha!' said Leicester, 'remember you to whom you speak?'

'I speak of her unworthy husband, my lord,' repeated 'Tressilian,' and my respect can find no softer language. The unhappy young woman is withdrawn from my knowledge, and sequestered in some secret place of this castle — if she be not transferred to some place of seclusion better fitted for bad designs. This must be reformed, my lord — I speak it as authorised by her father — and this ill-fated marriage must be avouched and proved in the Queen's presence, and the lady placed without restraint and at her own free disposal. And, permit me to say, it concerns no one's honour that these most just demands of mine should be complied with so much as it does that of your lordship.'

The earl stood as if he had been petrified, at the extreme coolness with which the man, whom he considered as having injured him so deeply, pleaded the cause of his criminal paramour, as if she had been an innocent woman, and he a disinterested advocate, nor was his wonder lessened by the warmth with which Tressilian seemed to demand for her the rank and situation which she had disgraced, and the advantages of which she was doubtless to share with the lover who advocated her cause with such effrontery. Tressilian had been silent for more than a minute ere the earl recovered from the excess of his astonishment, and, considering the prepossessions with which his mind was occupied, there is little wonder that his passion gained the mastery of every other consideration. 'I have heard you, Master Tressilian,' said he, 'without interruption, and I bless God that my ears were never before made to tingle by the words of so frontless a villain. The task of chastising you is fitter for the hangman's scourge than the sword of a nobleman, but yet — Villain, draw and defend thyself!'

As he spoke the last words, he dropped his mantle on the ground, struck Tressilian smartly with his sheathed sword, and instantly drawing his rapier, put himself into a posture of

assault. The vehement fury of his language at first filled Thressilian, in his turn, with surprise equal to what Leicester had felt when he addressed him. But astonishment gave place to resentment, when the unmented insults of his language were followed by a blow, which immediately put to flight every thought save that of instant combat. Thressilian's sword was instantly drawn, and though perhaps somewhat inferior to Leicester in the use of the weapon, he understood it well enough to maintain the contest with great spirit, the rather that of the two he was for the time the more cool, since he could not help imputing Leicester's conduct either to actual frenzy or to the influence of some strong delusion.

The rencontre had continued for several minutes, without either party receiving a wound, when of a sudden voices were heard beneath the portico, which formed the entrance of the terrace, mingled with the steps of men advancing hastily. 'We are interrupted,' said Leicester to his antagonist, 'follow me.'

At the same time a voice from the portico said, 'The jackanape is right—they are tilting here.'

Leicester, meanwhile, drew off Thressilian into a sort of recess behind one of the fountains, which served to conceal them, while six of the yeomen of the Queen's guard passed along the middle walk of the Pleasance, and they could hear one say to the rest, 'We shall never find them to-night among all these squirting funnels, squirrel-cages, and rabbit-holes, but if we light not on them before we reach the farther end, we will return, and mount a guard at the entrance, and so secure them till morning.'

'A proper matter,' said another, 'the drawing of swords so near the Queen's presence, ay, and in her very palace as 't were! Hang it, they must be some poor drunken game-cocks fallen to sparring, 't were pity almost we should find them—the penalty is chopping off a hand, is it not? 'T were hard to lose hand for handling a bit of steel, that comes so natural to one's gripe.'

'Thou art a brawler thyself, George,' said another, 'but take heed, for the law stands as thou sayest.'

'Ay,' said the first, 'an the act be not mildly construed, for thou know'st 't is not the Queen's palace, but my Lord of Leicester's.'

'Why, for that matter, the penalty may be as severe,' said another, 'for an our gracious mistress be queen, as she is, God save her, my Lord of Leicester is as good as king.'

'Hush! thou knave!' said a third, 'how know'st thou who may be within hearing?'

They passed on, making a kind of careless search, but seemingly more intent on their own conversation than bent on discovering the persons who had created the nocturnal disturbance.

They had no sooner passed forward along the terrace than Leicester, making a sign to Tressilian to follow him, glided away in an opposite direction, and escaped through the portico undiscovered. He conducted Tressilian to Mervyn's Tower, in which he was now again lodged, and then, ere parting with him, said these words, 'If thou hast courage to continue and bring to an end what is thus broken off, be near me when the court goes forth to-morrow, we shall find a time, and I will give you a signal when it is fitting.'

'My lord,' said Tressilian, 'at another time I might have inquired the meaning of this strange and furious inveteracy against me. But you have laid that on my shoulder which only blood can wash away, and were you as high as your proudest wishes ever carried you, I would have from you satisfaction for my wounded honour.'

On these terms they parted, but the adventures of the night were not yet ended with Leicester. He was compelled to pass by Saintlowe's Tower in order to gain the private passage which led to his own chamber, and in the entrance thereof he met Lord Hunsdon half clothed and with a naked sword under his arm.

'Are you awakened, too, with this larum, my Lord of Leicester?' said the old soldier. 'Tis well. By gog's nails, the nights are as noisy as the day in this castle of yours. Some two hours since, I was awakened by the screams of that poor brain sick Lady Varney, whom her husband was forcing away. I promise you it required both your warrant and the Queen's to keep me from entering into the game, and cutting that Varney of yours over the head, and now there is a brawl down in the Pleasance, or what call you the stone terrace walk, where all yonder gimcracks stand?'

The first part of the old man's speech went through the earl's heart like a knife, to the last he answered that he himself had heard the clash of swords, and had come down to take order with those who had been so insolent so near the Queen's presence.

'Nay, then,' said Hunsdon, 'I will be glad of your lordship's company.'

Leicester was thus compelled to turn back with the rough old lord to the Pleasance, where Hunsdon heard from the yeomen of the guard, who were under his immediate command, the unsuccessful search they had made for the authors of the disturbance, and bestowed for their pains some round dozen of curses on them, as lazy knaves and blind whoresons. Leicester also thought it necessary to seem angry that no discovery had been effected, but at length suggested to Lord Hunsdon that, after all, it could only be some foolish young men who had been drinking healths pottle-deep, and who would be sufficiently scared by the search which had taken place after them. Hunsdon, who was himself attached to his cup, allowed that a pint-flagon might cover many of the follies which it had caused. 'But,' added he, 'unless your lordship will be less liberal in your housekeeping, and restrain the overflow of ale, and wine, and wassail, I foresee it will end in my having some of these good fellows into the guard-house, and treating them to a dose of the strappado. And with this warning, good-night to you.'

Joyful at being rid of his company, Leicester took leave of him at the entrance of his lodging, where they had first met, and entering the private passage, took up the lamp which he had left there, and by its expiring light found the way to his own apartment.

CHAPTER XXXIX

Room ! room ! for my horse will wince
If he comes within so many yards of a prince ,
For to tell you true, and in rhyme,
He was foal d in Queen Elizabeth's time
When the great Earl of Lester
In his castle did feast her

BEN JONSON, *Masque of Owls*

THE amusement with which Elizabeth and her court were next day to be regaled was an exhibition by the true-hearted men of Coventry, who were to represent the strife between the English and the Danes, agreeably to a custom long preserved in their ancient borough, and warranted for truth by old histories and chronicles. In this pageant, one party of the townsfolk presented the Saxons and the other the Danes, and set forth, both in rude rhymes and with hard blows, the contentions of these two fierce nations, and the Amazonian courage of the English women, who, according to the story, were the principal agents in the general massacre of the Danes, which took place at Hocktide, in the year of God 1012. This sport, which had been long a favourite pastime with the men of Coventry, had, it seems, been put down by the influence of some zealous clergyman of the more precise cast, who chanced to have considerable influence with the magistrates. But the generality of the inhabitants had petitioned the Queen that they might have their play again, and be honoured with permission to represent it before her Highness. And when the matter was canvassed in the little council which usually attended the Queen for despatch of business, the proposal, although opposed by some of the stricter sort, found favour in the eyes of Elizabeth, who said that such toys occupied, without offence, the minds of many who, lacking them, might find worse subjects of pastime, and that their pastors, however commendable for learning and godliness, were somewhat too

sour in preaching against the pastimes of their flocks, and so the pageant was permitted to proceed

Accordingly, after a morning repast, which Master Laneham calls an ambrosial breakfast, the principal persons of the court, in attendance upon her Majesty, pressed to the Gallery Tower, to witness the approach of the two contending parties of English and Danes, and after a signal had been given, the gate which opened in the circuit of the chase was thrown wide to admit them. On they came, foot and horse, for some of the more ambitious burghers and yeomen had put themselves into fantastic dresses, imitating knights, in order to resemble the chivalry of the two different nations. However, to prevent fatal accidents, they were not permitted to appear on real horses, but had only license to accoutre themselves with those hobby-horses, as they are called, which anciently formed the chief delight of a morris-dance, and which still are exhibited on the stage, in the grand battle fought at the conclusion of Mr Bayes's tragedy. The infantry followed in similar disguises. The whole exhibition was to be considered as a sort of anti-masque, or burlesque of the more stately pageants, in which the nobility and gentry bore part in the show, and, to the best of their knowledge, imitated with accuracy the personages whom they represented. The Hocktide play was of a different character, the actors being persons of inferior degree, and their habits the better fitted for the occasion the more incongruous and ridiculous that they were in themselves. Accordingly, their array, which the progress of our tale allows us no time to describe, was ludicrous enough, and then weapons, though sufficiently formidable to deal sound blows, were long alder-poles instead of lances, and sound cudgels for swords, and for fence, both cavalry and infantry were well equipped with stout head-pieces and targets, both made of thick leather.

Captain Coxe, that celebrated humorist of Coventry, whose library of ballads, almanacks, and penny histories, fairly wrapped up in parchment, and tied round for security with a piece of whipcord, remains still the envy of antiquaries, being himself the ingenious person under whose direction the pageant had been set forth, rode valiantly on his hobby-horse before the bands of English, high-trussed, saith Laneham, and brandishing his long sword, as became an experienced man of war, who had fought under the Queen's father, bluff King Henry, at the siege of Boulogne. This chieftain was, as right and reason craved, the first to enter the lists, and, passing the gallery at the head

of his myrmidons, kissed the hilt of his sword to the Queen, and executed at the same time a gambade, the like whereof had never been practised by two-legged hobby-horse. Then passing on with all his followers of cavaliers and infantry, he drew them up with martial skill at the opposite extremity of the bridge, or tilt-yard, until his antagonists should be fairly prepared for the onset.

This was no long interval, for the Danish cavalry and infantry, no way inferior to the English in number, valour, and equipment, instantly arrived, with the northern bagpipe blowing before them in token of their country, and headed by a cunning master of defence, only inferior to the renowned Captain Coxe, if to him, in the discipline of war. The Danes, as invaders, took their station under the Gallery Tower, and opposite to that of Mortimer, and, when their arrangements were completely made, a signal was given for the encounter.

Their first charge upon each other was rather moderate, for either party had some dread of being forced into the lake. But as reinforcements came up on either side, the encounter grew from a skirmish into a blazing battle. They rushed upon one another, as Master Laneham testifies, like rams inflamed by jealousy, with such furious encounter that both parties were often overthrown, and the clubs and targets made a most horrible clatter. In many instances that happened which had been dreaded by the more experienced warriors who began the day of strife. The rails which defended the ledges of the bridge had been, perhaps on purpose, left but slightly fastened, and gave way under the pressure of those who thronged to the combat, so that the hot courage of many of the combatants received a sufficient cooling. These incidents might have occasioned more serious damage than became such an affray, for many of the champions who met with this mischance could not swim, and those who could were encumbered with their suits of leathern and paper armour, but the case had been provided for, and there were several boats in readiness to pick up the unfortunate warriors and convey them to the dry land, where, dripping and dejected, they comforted themselves with the hot ale and strong waters which were liberally allowed to them, without showing any desire to re enter so desperate a conflict.

Captain Coxe alone, that paragon of black-letter antiquaries, after twice experiencing, horse and man, the perilous leap from the bridge into the lake, equal to any extremity to which the favourite heroes of chivalry, whose exploits he studied in an

abridged form, whether Amadis, Belianis, Bevis, or his own Guy of Warwick, had ever been subjected to — Captain Coxe, we repeat, did alone, after two such mischances, rush again into the heat of conflict, his bases and the foot-cloth of his hobby-horse dropping water, and twice reanimated by voice and example the drooping spirits of the English, so that at last their victory over the Danish invaders became, as was just and reasonable, complete and decisive. Worthy he was to be rendered immortal by the pen of Ben Jonson, who, fifty years afterwards, deemed that a masque, exhibited at Kenilworth, could be ushered in by none with so much propriety as by the ghost of Captain Coxe, mounted upon his redoubted hobby-horse.

These rough rural gambols may not altogether agree with the reader's preconceived idea of an entertainment presented before Elizabeth, in whose reign letters revived with such brilliancy, and whose court, governed by a female whose sense of propriety was equal to her strength of mind, was no less distinguished for delicacy and refinement than her councils for wisdom and fortitude. But whether from the political wish to seem interested in popular sports, or whether from a spark of old Henry's rough masculine spirit, which Elizabeth sometimes displayed, it is certain the Queen laughed heartily at the imitation, or rather burlesque, of chivalry which was presented in the Coventry play. She called near her person the Earl of Sussex and Lord Hunsdon, partly perhaps to make amends to the former for the long and private audiences with which she had indulged the Earl of Leicester, by engaging him in conversation upon a pastime which better suited his taste than those pageants that were furnished forth from the stores of antiquity. The disposition which the Queen showed to laugh and jest with her military leaders gave the Earl of Leicester the opportunity he had been watching for withdrawing from the royal presence, which to the court around, so well had he chosen his time, had the graceful appearance of leaving his rival free access to the Queen's person, instead of availing himself of his right as her landlord to stand perpetually betwixt others and the light of her countenance.

Leicester's thoughts, however, had a far different object from mere courtesy, for no sooner did he see the Queen fairly engaged in conversation with Sussex and Hunsdon, behind whose back stood Sir Nicholas Blount, grinning from ear to ear at each word which was spoken, than, making a sign to Tressilian, who, according to appointment, watched his motions

at a little distance, he extricated himself from the press, and walking towards the chase, made his way through the crowds of ordinary spectators, who, with open mouth, stood gazing on the battle of the English and the Danes. When he had accomplished this, which was a work of some difficulty, he shot another glance behind him to see that Tressilian had been equally successful, and as soon as he saw him also free from the crowd, he led the way to a small thicket, behind which stood a lackey with two horses ready saddled. He flung himself on the one, and made signs to Tressilian to mount the other, who obeyed without speaking a single word.

Leicester then spurred his horse, and galloped without stopping until he reached a sequestered spot, environed by lofty oaks, about a mile's distance from the castle, and in an opposite direction from the scene to which curiosity was drawing every spectator. He there dismounted, bound his horse to a tree, and only pronouncing the words, 'Here there is no risk of interruption,' laid his cloak across his saddle and drew his sword.

Tressilian imitated his example punctually, yet could not forbear saying, as he drew his weapon, 'My lord, as I have been known to many as one who does not fear death, when placed in balance with honour, methinks I may without derogation ask, wherefore, in the name of all that is honourable, your lordship has dared to offer me such a mark of disgrace as places us on these terms with respect to each other?'

'If you like not such marks of my scorn,' replied the earl, 'betake yourself instantly to your weapon, lest I repeat the usage you complain of.'

'It shall not need, my lord,' said Tressilian. 'God judge betwixt us! and your blood, if you fall, be on your own head.'

He had scarce completed the sentence when they instantly closed in combat.

But Leicester, who was a perfect master of defence among all other exterior accomplishments of the time, had seen, on the preceding night, enough of Tressilian's strength and skill, to make him fight with more caution than heretofore, and prefer a secure revenge to a hasty one. For some minutes they fought with equal skill and fortune, till, in a desperate lounge which Leicester successfully put aside, Tressilian exposed himself at disadvantage, and, in a subsequent attempt to close, the earl forced his sword from his hand and stretched him on the ground. With a grim smile, he held the point of

his rapier within two inches of the throat of his fallen adversary, and placing his foot at the same time upon his breast, bid him confess his villanous wrongs towards him, and prepare for death.

'I have no villany nor wrong towards thee to confess,' answered Tressilian, 'and am better prepared for death than thou. Use thine advantage as thou wilt, and may God forgive you! I have given you no cause for this.'

'No cause!' exclaimed the earl — 'no cause! But why parley with such a slave? Die a liar, as thou hast lived!'

He had withdrawn his arm for the purpose of striking the fatal blow, when it was suddenly seized from behind.

The earl turned in wrath to shake off the unexpected obstacle, but was surprised to find that a strange-looking boy had hold of his sword-arm, and clung to it with such tenacity of grasp that he could not shake him off without a considerable struggle, in the course of which Tressilian had opportunity to rise and possess himself once more of his weapon. Leicester again turned towards him with looks of unabated ferocity, and the combat would have recommenced with still more desperation on both sides, had not the boy clung to Lord Leicester's knees, and in a shrill tone implored him to listen one moment ere he prosecuted this quarrel.

'Stand up, and let me go,' said Leicester, 'or, by Heaven, I will pierce thee with my rapier! What hast thou to do to bar my way to revenge?'

'Much — much!' exclaimed the undaunted boy, 'since my folly has been the cause of these bloody quarrels between you, and perchance of worse evils. Oh, if you would ever again enjoy the peace of an innocent mind, if you hope again to sleep in peace and unhaunted by remorse, take so much leisure as to peruse this letter, and then do as you list.'

While he spoke in this eager and earnest manner, to which his singular features and voice gave a goblin-like effect, he held up to Leicester a packet, secured with a long tress of woman's hair, of a beautiful light brown colour. Enraged as he was, nay, almost blinded with fury to see his destined revenge so strangely frustrated, the Earl of Leicester could not resist this extraordinary suppliant. He snatched the letter from his hand, changed colour as he looked on the superscription, undid, with faltering hand, the knot which secured it, glanced over the contents, and, staggering back, would have fallen, had he not rested against the trunk of a tree, where he stood for

an instant, his eyes bent on the letter, and his sword-point turned to the ground, without seeming to be conscious of the presence of an antagonist towards whom he had shown little mercy, and who might in turn have taken him at advantage. But for such revenge Tressilian was too noble-minded, he also stood still in surprise, waiting the issue of this strange fit of passion, but holding his weapon ready to defend himself, in case of need, against some new and sudden attack on the part of Leicester, whom he again suspected to be under the influence of actual frenzy. The boy, indeed, he easily recognised as his old acquaintance Dickon, whose face, once seen, was scarcely to be forgotten, but how he came hither at so critical a moment, why his interference was so energetic, and, above all, how it came to produce so powerful an effect upon Leicester, were questions which he could not solve.

But the letter was of itself powerful enough to work effects yet more wonderful. It was that which the unfortunate Amy had written to her husband, in which she alleged the reasons and manner of her flight from Cumnor Place, informed him of her having made her way to Kenilworth to enjoy his protection, and mentioned the circumstances which had compelled her to take refuge in Tressilian's apartment, earnestly requesting he would, without delay, assign her a more suitable asylum. The letter concluded with the most earnest expressions of devoted attachment and submission to his will in all things, and particularly respecting her situation and place of residence, conjuring him only that she might not be placed under the guardianship or restraint of Varney.

The letter dropped from Leicester's hand when he had perused it. 'Take my sword,' he said, 'Tressilian, and pierce my heart, as I would but now have pierced yours!'

'My lord,' said Tressilian, 'you have done me great wrong, but something within my breast ever whispered that it was by egregious error.'

'Error indeed!' said Leicester, and handed him the letter, 'I have been made to believe a man of honour a villain, and the best and purest of creatures a false profligate. Wretched boy, why comes this letter now, and where has the bearer lingered?'

'I dare not tell you, my lord,' said the boy, withdrawing, as if to keep beyond his reach, 'but here comes one who was the messenger.'

Wayland at the same moment came up, and, interrogated

by Leicester, hastily detailed all the circumstances of his escape with Amy, the fatal practices which had driven her to flight, and her anxious desire to throw herself under the instant protection of her husband, pointing out the evidence of the domestics of Kenilworth, 'who could not,' he observed, 'but remember her eager inquiries after the Earl of Leicester on her first arrival'

'The villains!' exclaimed Leicester, 'but oh, that worst of villains, Varney' and she is even now in his power!'

'But not, I trust in God,' said Tressilian, 'with any commands of fatal import?'

'No — no — no!' exclaimed the earl, hastily 'I said something in madness, but it was recalled — fully recalled — by a hasty messenger, and she is now — she must now be safe.'

'Yes,' said Tressilian, 'she *must* be safe, and I *must* be assured of her safety. My own quarrel with you is ended, my lord, but there is another to begin with the seducer of Amy Robsart, who has screened his guilt under the cloak of the infamous Varney'

'The *seducer* of Amy!' replied Leicester, with a voice like thunder, 'say her husband! — her misguided, blinded, most unworthy husband! She is as surely Countess of Leicester as I am belted earl. Nor can you, sir, point out that manner of justice which I will not render her at my own free will. I need scarce say, I fear not your compulsion.'

The generous nature of Tressilian was instantly turned from consideration of anything personal to himself, and centred at once upon Amy's welfare. He had by no means undoubting confidence in the fluctuating resolutions of Leicester, whose mind seemed to him agitated beyond the government of calm reason, neither did he, notwithstanding the assurances he had received, think Amy safe in the hands of his dependants. 'My lord,' he said, calmly, 'I mean you no offence, and am far from seeking a quarrel. But my duty to Sir Hugh Robsart compels me to carry this matter instantly to the Queen, that the countess's rank may be acknowledged in her person.'

'You shall not need, sir,' replied the earl, haughtily, 'do not dare to interfere. No voice but Dudley's shall proclaim Dudley's infamy. To Elizabeth herself will I tell it, and then for Cumnor Place with the speed of life and death!'

So saying, he unbound his horse from the tree, threw himself into the saddle, and rode at full gallop towards the castle.

'Take me before you, Master Tressilian,' said the boy, seeing

Tressilian mount in the same haste, 'my tale is not all told out, and I need your protection'

Tressilian complied, and followed the earl, though at a less furious rate. By the way the boy confessed, with much contrition, that in resentment at Wayland's evading all his inquiries concerning the lady, after Dickon conceived he had in various ways merited his confidence, he had purloined from him, in revenge, the letter with which Amy had entrusted him for the Earl of Leicester. His purpose was to have restored it to him that evening, as he reckoned himself sure of meeting with him, in consequence of Wayland's having to perform the part of Arion in the pageant. He was indeed something alarmed when he saw to whom the letter was addressed, but he argued that, as Leicester did not return to Kenilworth until that evening, it would be again in the possession of the proper messenger as soon as, in the nature of things, it could possibly be delivered. But Wayland came not to the pageant, having been in the interim expelled by Lambourne from the castle, and the boy, not being able to find him, or to get speech of Tressilian, and finding himself in possession of a letter addressed to no less a person than the Earl of Leicester, became much afraid of the consequences of his frolic. The caution, and indeed the alarm, which Wayland had expressed respecting Varney and Lambourne, led him to judge that the letter must be designed for the earl's own hand, and that he might prejudice the lady by giving it to any of the domestics. He made an attempt or two to obtain an audience of Leicester, but the singularity of his features and the meanness of his appearance occasioned his being always repulsed by the insolent menials whom he applied to for that purpose. Once, indeed, he had nearly succeeded, when, in prowling about, he found in the grotto the casket which he knew to belong to the unlucky countess, having seen it on her journey, for nothing escaped his prying eye. Having strove in vain to restore it either to Tressilian or the countess, he put it into the hands, as we have seen, of Leicester himself, but unfortunately he did not recognise him in his disguise.

At length the boy thought he was on the point of succeeding, when the earl came down to the lower part of the hall, but just as he was about to accost him, he was prevented by Tressilian. As sharp in ear as in wit, the boy heard the appointment settled betwixt them to take place in the Pleasance, and resolved to add a third to the party, in hopes that, either in coming or in returning, he might find an opportunity of de

livering the letter to Leicester, for strange stories began to flit among the domestics, which alarmed him for the lady's safety. Accident, however, detained Dickon a little behind the earl, and, as he reached the arcade, he saw them engaged in combat, in consequence of which he hastened to alarm the guard, having little doubt that what bloodshed took place betwixt them might arise out of his own folie. Continuing to lurk in the portico, he heard the second appointment which Leicester, at parting, assigned to Tressilian, and was keeping them in view during the encounter of the Coventry men, when, to his surprise, he recognised Wayland in the crowd, much disguised, indeed, but not sufficiently so to escape the prying glance of his old comrade. They drew aside out of the crowd to explain their situation to each other. The boy confessed to Wayland what we have above told, and the artist, in return, informed him that his deep anxiety for the fate of the unfortunate lady had brought him back to the neighbourhood of the castle, upon his learning that morning at a village about ten miles distant that Varney and Lambourne, whose violence he dreaded, had both left Kenilworth over-night.

While they spoke, they saw Leicester and Tressilian separate themselves from the crowd, dogged them until they mounted their horses, when the boy, whose speed of foot has been before mentioned, though he could not possibly keep up with them, yet arrived, as we have seen, soon enough to save Tressilian's life. The boy had just finished his tale when they reached the Gallery Tower.

CHAPTER XL

High o'er the eastern steep the sun is beaming,
And darkness hies with her deceitful shadows,
So truth prevails o'er falsehood

Old Play

AS Tressilian rode along the bridge lately the scene of so much riotous sport, he could not but observe that men's countenances had singularly changed during the space of his brief absence. The mock fight was over, but the men, still habited in their masquing suits, stood together in groups, like the inhabitants of a city who have been just startled by some strange and alarming news.

When he reached the base-court, appearances were the same domestics, retainers, and under officers stood together and whispered, bending their eyes towards the windows of the great hall, with looks which seemed at once alarmed and mysterious.

Sir Nicholas Blount was the first person of his own particular acquaintance Tressilian saw, who left him no time to make inquiries, but greeted him with, 'God help thy heart, Tressilian, thou art fitter for a clown than a courtier thou canst not attend, as becomes one who follows her Majesty. Here you are called for, wished for, waited for—no man but you will serve the turn, and hither you come with a misbegotten brat on thy horse's neck, as if thou wert dry nurse to some sucking devil, and wert just returned from airing.'

'Why, what is the matter?' said Tressilian, letting go the boy, who sprung to ground like a feather, and himself dismounting at the same time.

'Why, no one knows the matter,' replied Blount. 'I cannot smell it out myself, though I have a nose like other courtiers. Only, my Lord of Leicester has galloped along the bridge, as if he would have rode over all in his passage, demanding an audience of the Queen, and is closeted even now with her

and Burleigh and Walsingham ; and you are called for, but whether the matter be treason or waise, no one knows’

‘He speaks true, by Heaven’ said Raleigh, who that instant appeared ; ‘you must immediately to the Queen’s presence.’

‘Be not rash, Raleigh,’ said Blount, ‘remember his boots. For Heaven’s sake, go to my chamber, dear Tressilian, and don my new bloom-coloured silken hose, I have worn them but twice’

‘Pshaw!’ answered Tressilian, ‘do thou take care of this boy, Blount, be kind to him, and look he escapes you not—much depends on him’

So saying, he followed Raleigh hastily, leaving honest Blount with the bridle of his horse in one hand and the boy in the other

Blount gave a long look after him. ‘Nobody,’ he said, ‘calls me to these mysteries, and he leaves me here to play horse-keeper and child-keeper at once I could excuse the one, for I love a good horse naturally, but to be plagued with a bratchet whelp! Whence come ye, my fair-favoured little gossip?’

‘From the Fens,’ answered the boy.

‘And what didst thou learn there, forward imp?’

‘To catch gulls, with their webbed feet and yellow stockings,’ said the boy.

‘Umph!’ said Blount, looking down on his own immense roses ‘Nay, then the devil take him asks thee more questions’

Meantime, Tressilian traversed the full length of the great hall, in which the astonished courtiers formed various groups, and were whispering mysteriously together, while all kept their eyes fixed on the door which led from the upper end of the hall into the Queen’s withdrawing-apartment Raleigh pointed to the door Tressilian knocked and was instantly admitted. Many a neck was stretched to gain a view into the interior of the apartment, but the tapestry which covered the door on the inside was dropped too suddenly to admit the slightest gratification of curiosity.

Upon entrance, Tressilian found himself, not without a strong palpitation of heart, in the presence of Elizabeth, who was walking to and fro in a violent agitation, which she seemed to scorn to conceal, while two or three of her most sage and confidential counsellors exchanged anxious looks with each other, but delayed speaking till her wrath had abated. Before the empty chair of state in which she had been seated, and

which was half pushed aside by the violence with which she had started from it, knelt Leicester, his arms crossed and his brows bent on the ground, still and motionless as the effigies upon a sepulchre. Beside him stood the Lord Shrewsbury, then Earl Marshal of England, holding his baton of office, the earl's sword was unbuckled, and lay before him on the floor.

'Ho, sir,' said the Queen, coming close up to Tressilian, and stamping on the floor with the action and manner of Henry himself, '*you* knew of this fair work — *you* are an accomplice in this deception which has been practised on us — *you* have been a main cause of our doing injustice?' Tressilian dropped on his knee before the Queen, his sense showing him the risk of attempting any defence at that moment of irritation. 'Art dumb, sirrah?' she continued, 'thou know'st of this affair, dost thou not?'

'Not, gracious madam, that this poor lady was Countess of Leicester.'

'Nor shall any one know her for such,' said Elizabeth 'Death of my life! Countess of Leicester! I say Dame Amy Dudley, and well if she hath not cause to write herself widow of the traitor Robert Dudley.'

'Madam,' said Leicester, 'do with me what it may be your will to do, but work no injury on this gentleman, he hath in no way deserved it.'

'And will he be the better for thy intercession,' said the Queen, leaving Tressilian, who slowly arose, and rushing to Leicester, who continued kneeling — 'the better for *thy* intercession, thou doubly false — thou doubly forsworn — of thy intercession, whose villany hath made me ridiculous to my subjects and odious to myself? I could tear out mine eyes for their blindness!'

Burleigh here ventured to interpose.

'Madam,' he said, 'remember that you are a queen — Queen of England — mother of your people. Give not way to this wild storm of passion.'

Elizabeth turned round to him, while a tear actually twinkled in her proud and angry eye. 'Burleigh,' she said, 'thou art a statesman, thou dost not, thou canst not, comprehend half the scorn, half the misery, that man has poured on me!'

With the utmost caution, with the deepest reverence, Burleigh took her hand at the moment he saw her heart was at

the fullest, and led her aside to an oriel window, apart from the others.

'Madam,' he said, 'I am a statesman, but I am also a man — a man already grown old in your councils, who have not, and cannot have, a wish on earth but your glory and happiness, I pray you to be composed'

'Ah, Burleigh,' said Elizabeth, 'thou little knowest ——' here her tears fell over her cheeks in despite of her.

'I do — I do know, my honoured sovereign — Oh beware that you lead not others to guess that which they know not!'

'Ha!'

said Elizabeth, pausing as if a new train of thought had suddenly shot across her brain — 'Burleigh, thou art right — thou art right — anything but disgrace — anything but a confession of weakness — anything rather than seem the cheated — slighted — 'Sdeath! to think on it is distraction!'

'Be but yourself, my Queen,' said Burleigh, 'and soar far above a weakness which no Englishman will ever believe his Elizabeth could have entertained, unless the violence of her disappointment carries a sad conviction to his bosom'

'What weakness, my lord?' said Elizabeth, haughtily; 'would you too insinuate that the favour in which I held yonder proud traitor derived its source from aught ——' But here she could no longer sustain the proud tone which she had assumed, and again softened as she said, 'But why should I strive to deceive even thee, my good and wise servant?'

Burleigh stooped to kiss her hand with affection, and — rare in the annals of courts — a tear of true sympathy dropped from the eye of the minister on the hand of his sovereign

It is probable that the consciousness of possessing this sympathy aided Elizabeth in supporting her mortification and suppressing her extreme resentment, but she was still more moved by fear that her passion should betray to the public the affront and the disappointment which, alike as a woman and a queen, she was so anxious to conceal. She turned from Burleigh, and sternly paced the hall till her features had recovered their usual dignity and her mien its wonted stateliness of regular motion.

'Our sovereign is her noble self once more,' whispered Burleigh to Walsingham, 'mark what she does, and take heed you thwart her not'

She then approached Leicester, and said, with calmness, 'My Lord Shrewsbury, we discharge you of your prisoner — My Lord of Leicester, rise and take up your sword, a quarter of an

hour's restraint, under the custody of our marshal, my lord, is, we think, no high penance for months of falsehood practised upon us. We will now hear the progress of this affair' She then seated herself in her chair, and said, 'You, Tressilian, step forward and say what you know.'

Tressilian told his story generously, suppressing as much as he could what affected Leicester, and saying nothing of their having twice actually fought together. It is very probable that, in doing so, he did the earl good service, for had the Queen at that instant found anything on account of which she could vent her wrath upon him, without laying open sentiments of which she was ashamed, it might have fared hard with him. She paused when Tressilian had finished his tale.

'We will take that Wayland,' she said, 'into our own service, and place the boy in our secretary office for instruction, that he may in future use discretion towards letters. For you, Tressilian, you did wrong in not communicating the whole truth to us, and your promise not to do so was both imprudent and undutiful. Yet having given your word to this unhappy lady, it was the part of a man and a gentleman to keep it, and, on the whole, we esteem you for the character you have sustained in this matter. My Lord of Leicester, it is now your turn to tell us the truth, an exercise to which you seem of late to have been too much a stranger.'

Accordingly, she extorted, by successive questions, the whole history of his first acquaintance with Amy Robsart—their marriage—his jealousy—the causes on which it was founded, and many particulars besides. Leicester's confession, for such it might be called, was wrenched from him piecemeal, yet was upon the whole accurate, excepting that he totally omitted to mention that he had, by implication or otherwise, assented to Varney's designs upon the life of his countess. Yet the consciousness of this was what at that moment lay nearest to his heart, and although he trusted in great measure to the very positive counter orders which he had sent by Lambourne, it was his purpose to set out for Cumnor Place in person as soon as he should be dismissed from the presence of the Queen, who, he concluded, would presently leave Kenilworth.

But the earl reckoned without his host. It is true, his presence and his communications were gall and wormwood to his once partial mistress. But, barred from every other and more direct mode of revenge, the Queen perceived that she gave her false suitor torture by these inquiries, and dwelt on

them for that reason, no more regarding the pain which she herself experienced than the savage cares for the searing of his own hands by grasping the hot pincers with which he tears the flesh of his captive enemy

At length, however, the haughty lord, like a deer that turns to bay, gave intimation that his patience was failing 'Madam,' he said, 'I have been much to blame, more than even your just resentment has expressed Yet, madam, let me say, that my guilt, if it be unpardonable, was not unprovoked, and that, if beauty and condescending dignity could seduce the frail heart of a human being, I might plead both as the causes of my concealing this secret from your Majesty'

The Queen was so much struck with this reply, which Leicester took care should be heard by no one but herself, that she was for the moment silenced, and the earl had the temerity to pursue his advantage 'Your Grace, who has pardoned so much, will excuse my throwing myself on your royal mercy for those expressions which were yester-morning accounted but a light offence.'

The Queen fixed her eyes on him while she replied, 'Now, by Heaven, my lord, thy effrontery passes the bounds of belief as well as patience! But it shall avail thee nothing. What, ho! my lords, come all and hear the news. My Lord of Leicester's stolen marriage has cost me a husband and England a king His lordship is patriarchal in his tastes one wife at a time was insufficient, and he designed us the honour of his left hand Now, is not this too insolent—that I could not grace him with a few marks of court favour, but he must presume to think my hand and crown at his disposal? You, however, think better of me, and I can pity this ambitious man, as I could a child whose bubble of soap has burst between his hands. We go to the presence-chamber. My lord of Leicester, we command your close attendance on us.'

All was eager expectation in the hall, and what was the universal astonishment when the Queen said to those next her, 'The revels of Kenilworth are not yet exhausted, my lords and ladies. we are to solemnise the noble owner's marriage'

There was a universal expression of surprise

'It is true, on our royal word,' said the Queen, 'he hath kept this a secret even from us, that he might surprise us with it at this very place and time I see you are dying of curiosity to know the happy bride It is Amy Robsart, the same who,

to make up the May-game yesterday, figured in the pageant as the wife of his servant Varney'

'For God's sake, madam,' said the earl, approaching her with a mixture of humility, vexation, and shame in his countenance, and speaking so low as to be heard by no one else, 'take my head, as you threatened in your anger, and spare me these taunts! Urge not a falling man — tread not on a crushed worm.'

'A worm, my lord!' said the Queen, in the same tone, 'nay, a snake is the nobler reptile, and the more exact similitude — the frozen snake you wot of, which was warmed in a certain bosom —'

'For your own sake — for mine, madam,' said the earl — 'while there is yet some reason left in me —'

'Speak aloud, my lord,' said Elizabeth, 'and at farther distance, so please you, your breath thaws our ruff' What have you to ask of us?'

'Permission,' said the unfortunate earl, humbly, 'to travel to Cumnor Place.'

'To fetch home your bride belike? Why, ay, that is but right, for, as we have heard, she is indifferently cared for there. But, my lord, you go not in person — we have counted upon passing certain days in this castle of Kenilworth, and it were slight courtesy to leave us without a landlord during our residence here. Under your favour, we cannot think to incur such disgrace in the eyes of our subjects. Tressilian shall go to Cumnor Place instead of you, and with him some gentleman who hath been sworn of our chamber, lest my Lord of Leicester should be again jealous of his old rival. Whom wouldst thou have to be in commission with thee, Tressilian?'

Tressilian, with humble deference, suggested the name of Raleigh.

'Why, ay,' said the Queen, 'so God ha' me, thou hast made a good choice. He is a young knight besides, and to deliver a lady from prison is an appropriate first adventure. Cumnor Place is little better than a prison, you are to know, my lords and ladies. Besides, there are certain faitours there whom we would willingly have in fast keeping. You will furnish them, Master Secretary, with the warrant necessary to secure the bodies of Richard Varney and the foreign Alasco, dead or alive. Take a sufficient force with you, gentlemen, bring the lady here in all honour, lose no time, and God be with you!'

* They bowed, and left the presence.

Who shall describe how the rest of that day was spent at

Kenilworth? The Queen, who seemed to have remained there for the sole purpose of mortifying and taunting the Earl of Leicester, showed herself as skilful in that female art of vengeance as she was in the science of wisely governing her people. The train of state soon caught the signal, and, as he walked among his own splendid preparations, the Lord of Kenilworth, in his own castle, already experienced the lot of a disgraced courtier, in the slight regard and cold manners of alienated friends, and the ill-concealed triumph of avowed and open enemies. Sussex, from his natural military frankness of disposition, Burleigh and Walsingham, from their penetrating and prospective sagacity, and some of the ladies, from the compassion of their sex, were the only persons in the crowded court who retained towards him the countenance they had borne in the morning.

So much had Leicester been accustomed to consider court favour as the principal object of his life, that all other sensations were, for the time, lost in the agony which his haughty spirit felt at the succession of petty insults and studied neglects to which he had been subjected, but when he retired to his own chamber for the night, that long fair tress of hair which had once secured Amy's letter fell under his observation, and, with the influence of a counter-charm, awakened his heart to nobler and more natural feelings. He kissed it a thousand times, and while he recollected that he had it always in his power to shun the mortifications which he had that day undergone, by retiring into a dignified and even prince-like seclusion with the beautiful and beloved partner of his future life, he felt that he could rise above the revenge which Elizabeth had condescended to take.

Accordingly, on the following day, the whole conduct of the earl displayed so much dignified equanimity, he seemed so solicitous about the accommodations and amusements of his guests, yet so indifferent to their personal demeanour towards him, so respectfully distant to the Queen, yet so patient of her harassing displeasure, that Elizabeth changed her manner to him, and, though cold and distant, ceased to offer him any direct affront. She intimated also, with some sharpness, to others around her, who thought they were consulting her pleasure in showing a neglectful conduct to the earl, that, while they remained at Kenilworth, they ought to show the civility due from guests to the lord of the castle. In short, matters were so far changed in twenty-four hours that some of the more

experienced and sagacious courtiers foresaw a strong possibility of Leicester's restoration to favour, and regulated their demeanour towards him, as those who might one day claim merit for not having deserted him in adversity. It is time, however, to leave these intrigues, and follow Tressilian and Raleigh on their journey.

The troop consisted of six persons, for, besides Wayland, they had in company a royal pursuivant and two stout serving-men. All were well armed, and travelled as fast as it was possible with justice to their horses, which had a long journey before them. They endeavoured to procure some tidings as they rode along of Varney and his party, but could hear none, as they had travelled in the dark. At a small village about twelve miles from Kenilworth, where they gave some refreshment to their horses, a poor clergyman, the curate of the place, came out of a small cottage, and entreated any of the company who might know aught of surgery to look in for an instant on a dying man.

The empiric Wayland undertook to do his best, and as the curate conducted him to the spot, he learned that the man had been found on the highroad, about a mile from the village, by labourers, as they were going to their work on the preceding morning, and the curate had given him shelter in his house. He had received a gun-shot wound which seemed to be obviously mortal, but whether in a broil or from robbers they could not learn, as he was in a fever, and spoke nothing connectedly. Wayland entered the dark and lowly apartment, and no sooner had the curate drawn aside the curtain than he knew in the distorted features of the patient the countenance of Michael Lambourne. Under pretence of seeking something which he wanted, Wayland hastily apprised his fellow-travellers of this extraordinary circumstance, and both Tressilian and Raleigh, full of boding apprehensions, hastened to the curate's house to see the dying man.

The wretch was by this time in the agonies of death, from which a much better surgeon than Wayland could not have rescued him, for the bullet had passed clear through his body. He was sensible, however, at least in part, for he knew Tressilian, and made signs that he wished him to stoop over his bed. Tressilian did so, and after some inarticulate murmurs, in which the names of Varney and Lady Leicester were alone distinguishable, Lambourne bade him 'Make haste, or he would come too late.' It was in vain Tressilian urged the patient for farther

information ; he seemed to become in some degree delirious, and when he again made a signal to attract Tressilian's attention, it was only for the purpose of desiring him to inform his uncle, Giles Gosling of the Black Bear, 'That he had died without his shoes after all' A convulsion verified his words a few minutes after, and the travellers derived nothing from having met with him saving the obscure fears concerning the fate of the countess which his dying words were calculated to convey, and which induced them to urge their journey with their utmost speed, pressing horses in the Queen's name when those which they rode became unfit for service.

CHAPTER XLI

The death bell thrice was heard to ring,
An aerial voice was heard to call,
And thrice the raven flapp'd its wing
Around the towers of Cumnor Hall

MICKLE

WE are now to return to that part of our story where we intimated that Varney, possessed of the authority of the Earl of Leicester, and of the Queen's permission to the same effect, hastened to secure himself against discovery of his perfidy by removing the countess from Kenilworth Castle. He had proposed to set forth early in the morning, but reflecting that the earl might relent in the interim, and seek another interview with the countess, he resolved to prevent, by immediate departure, all chance of what would probably have ended in his detection and ruin. For this purpose he called for Lambourne, and was exceedingly incensed to find that his trusty attendant was abroad on some ramble in the neighbouring village or elsewhere. As his return was expected, Sir Richard commanded that he should prepare himself for attending him on an immediate journey, and follow him in case he returned after his departure.

In the meanwhile, Varney used the ministry of a servant called Robin Tider, one to whom the mysteries of Cumnor Place were already in some degree known, as he had been there more than once in attendance on the earl. To this man, whose character resembled that of Lambourne, though he was neither quite so prompt nor altogether so profligate, Varney gave command to have three horses saddled and to prepare a horse litter, and have them in readiness at the postern gate. The natural enough excuse of his lady's insanity, which was now universally believed, accounted for the secrecy with which she was to be removed from the castle, and he reckoned on the same apology in case the unfortunate Amy's resistance or screams should

render such necessary The agency of Anthony Foster was indispensable, and that Varney now went to secure

This person, naturally of a sour, unsocial disposition, and somewhat tired, besides, with his journey from Cumnor to Warwickshire, in order to bring the news of the countess's escape, had early extricated himself from the crowd of wassailers, and betaken himself to his chamber, where he lay asleep, when Varney, completely equipped for travelling, and with a dark lantern in his hand, entered his apartment He paused an instant to listen to what his associate was murmuring in his sleep, and could plainly distinguish the words, '*Ave Maria, ora pro nobis*, no — it runs not so Deliver us from evil — ay, so it goes'

'Praying in his sleep,' said Varney, 'and confounding his old and new devotions He must have more need of prayer ere I am done with him What ho! holy man — most blessed penitent! Awake — awake! The devil has not discharged you from service yet'

As Varney at the same time shook the sleeper by the arm, it changed the current of his ideas, and he roared out, 'Thieves! — thieves! I will die in defence of my gold — my hard-won gold, that has cost me so dear Where is Janet? Is Janet safe?'

'Safe enough, thou bellowing fool!' said Varney, 'art thou not ashamed of thy clamour?'

Foster by this time was broad awake, and, sitting up in his bed, asked Varney the meaning of so untimely a visit 'It augurs nothing good,' he added.

'A false prophecy, most sainted Anthony,' returned Varney 'it augurs that the hour is come for converting thy leasehold into copyhold What sayest thou to that?'

'Hadst thou told me this in broad day,' said Foster, 'I had rejoiced, but at this dead hour, and by this dim light, and looking on thy pale face, which is a ghastly contradiction to thy light words, I cannot but rather think of the work that is to be done than the guerdon to be gained by it'

'Why, thou fool, it is but to escort thy charge back to Cumnor Place'

'Is that indeed all?' said Foster, 'thou look'st deadly pale, and thou art not moved by trifles — is that indeed all?'

'Ay, that — and maybe a trifle more,' said Varney

'Ah, that trifle more!' said Foster, 'still thou look'st paler and paler'

'Heed not my countenance,' said Varney, 'you see it by this

wretched light. Up and be doing, man. Think of Cumnor Place, thine own proper copyhold. Why, thou mayest found a weekly lectureship, besides endowing Janet like a baron's daughter. Seventy pounds and odd.'

'Seventy-nine pounds, five shillings, and fivepence halfpenny, besides the value of the wood,' said Foster, 'and I am to have it all as copyhold?'

'All, man — squirrels and all. no gipsy shall cut the value of a broom, no boy so much as take a bird's nest, without paying thee a quittance. Ay, that is right — don thy matters as fast as possible, horses and everything are ready, all save that accursed villain Lambourne, who is out on some infernal gambol.'

'Ay, Sir Richard,' said Foster, 'you would take no advice. I ever told you that drunken profligate would fail you at need. Now, I could have helped you to a sober young man.'

'What, some slow-spoken, long-breathed brother of the congregation? Why, we shall have use for such also, man. Heaven be praised, we shall lack labourers of every kind. Ay, that is right — forget not your pistols. Come now, and let us away.'

'Whither?' said Anthony.

'To my lady's chamber, and, mind, she *must* along with us. Thou art not a fellow to be startled by a shriek?'

'Not if Scripture reason can be rendered for it, and it is written, "Wives, obey your husbands." But will my lord's commands bear us out if we use violence?'

'Tush, man! here is his signet,' answered Varney, and having thus silenced the objections of his associate, they went together to Lord Hunsdon's apartments, and, acquainting the sentinel with their purpose, as a matter sanctioned by the Queen and the Earl of Leicester, they entered the chamber of the unfortunate countess.

The horror of Amy may be conceived when, starting from a broken slumber, she saw at her bedside Varney, the man on earth she most feared and hated. It was even a consolation to see that he was not alone, though she had so much reason to dread his sullen companion.

'Madam,' said Varney, 'there is no time for ceremony. My Lord of Leicester, having fully considered the exigencies of the time, sends you his orders immediately to accompany us on our return to Cumnor Place. See, here is his signet, in token of his instant and pressing commands.'

'It is false!' said the countess, 'thou hast stolen the war-

rant — thou, who art capable of every villany, from the blackest to the basest !’

‘It is TRUE, madam,’ replied Varney, ‘so true, that if you do not instantly arise and prepare to attend us, we must compel you to obey our orders’

‘Compel ! thou dardest not put it to that issue, base as thou art,’ exclaimed the unhappy countess

‘That remains to be proved, madam,’ said Varney, who had determined on intimidation as the only means of subduing her high spirit, ‘if you put me to it, you will find me a rough groom of the chambers’

It was at this threat that Amy screamed so fearfully that, had it not been for the received opinion of her insanity, she would quickly have had Lord Hunsdon and others to her aid. Perceiving, however, that her cries were vain, she appealed to Foster in the most affecting terms, conjuring him, as his daughter Janet’s honour and purity were dear to him, not to permit her to be treated with unwomanly violence

‘Why, madam, wives must obey their husbands — there’s Scripture warrant for it,’ said Foster, ‘and if you will dress yourself and come with us patiently, there’s no one shall lay finger on you while I can draw a pistol-trigger’

Seeing no help arrive, and comforted even by the dogged language of Foster, the countess promised to rise and dress herself, if they would agree to retire from the room. Varney at the same time assured her of all safety and honour while in their hands, and promised that he himself would not approach her, since his presence was so displeasing. Her husband, he added, would be at Cumnor Place within twenty-four hours after they had reached it

Somewhat comforted by this assurance, upon which, however, she saw little reason to rely, the unhappy Amy made her toilette by the assistance of the lantern, which they left with her when they quitted the apartment

Weeping, trembling, and praying, the unfortunate lady dressed herself — with sensations how different from the days in which she was wont to decorate herself in all the pride of conscious beauty ! She endeavoured to delay the completing her dress as long as she could, until, terrified by the impatience of Varney, she was obliged to declare herself ready to attend them

When they were about to move, the countess clung to Foster with such an appearance of terror at Varney’s approach, that the latter protested to her, with a deep oath, that he had no

intention whatever of even coming near her 'If you do but consent to execute your husband's will in quietness, you shall,' he said, 'see but little of me I will leave you undisturbed to the care of the usher whom your good taste prefers'

'My husband's will!' she exclaimed. 'But it is the will of God, and let that be sufficient to me. I will go with Master Foster as unresistingly as ever did a literal sacrifice. He is a father at least, and will have decency if not humanity For thee, Varney, were it my latest word, thou art an equal stranger to both.'

Varney replied only, she was at liberty to choose, and walked some paces before them to show the way, while, half-leaning on Foster and half carried by him, the countess was transported from Saintlowe's Tower to the postern gate, where Tider waited with the litter and horses

The countess was placed in the former without resistance She saw with some satisfaction that, while Foster and Tider rode close by the litter, which the latter conducted, the dreaded Varney lingered behind, and was soon lost in darkness. A little while she strove, as the road winded round the verge of the lake, to keep sight of those stately towers which called her husband lord, and which still, in some places, sparkled with lights, where wassailers were yet revelling But when the direction of the road rendered this no longer possible, she drew back her head, and, sinking down in the litter, recommended herself to the care of Providence.

Besides the desire of inducing the countess to proceed quietly on her journey, Varney had it also in view to have an interview with Lambourne, by whom he every moment expected to be joined, without the presence of any witnesses. He knew the character of this man — prompt, bloody, resolute, and greedy — and judged him the most fit agent he could employ in his farther designs. But ten miles of their journey had been measured ere he heard the hasty clatter of horse's hoofs behind him, and was overtaken by Michael Lambourne.

Fretted as he was with his absence, Varney received his profligate servant with a rebuke of unusual bitterness. 'Drunken villain,' he said, 'thy idleness and debauched folly will stretch a halter ere it be long, and, for me, I care not how soon!'

This style of oburgation, Lambourne, who was elated to an unusual degree, not only by an extraordinary cup of wine, but by the sort of confidential interview he had just had with the earl, and the secret of which he had made himself master, did not

receive with his wonted humility 'He would take no insolence of language,' he said, 'from the best knight that ever wore spurs. Lord Leicester had detained him on some business of import, and that was enough for Varney, who was but a servant like himself'

Varney was not a little surprised at his unusual tone of insolence, but, ascribing it to liquor, suffered it to pass as if unnoticed, and then began to tamper with Lambourne touching his willingness to aid in removing out of the Earl of Leicester's way an obstacle to a rise which would put it in his power to reward his trusty followers to their utmost wish. And upon Michael Lambourne's seeming ignorant what was meant, he plainly indicated 'the litter-load, yonder,' as the impediment which he desired should be removed.

'Look you, Sir Richard, and so forth,' said Michael, 'some are wiser than some, that is one thing, and some are worse than some, that's another. I know my lord's mind on this matter better than thou, for he hath trusted me fully in the matter. Here are his mandates, and his last words were, "Michael Lambourne" — for his lordship speaks to me as a gentleman of the sword, and useth not the words "drunken villain," or such-like phrases of those who know not how to bear new dignities — "Varney," says he, "must pay the utmost respect to my countess. I trust to you for looking to it, Lambourne," says his lordship, "and you must bring back my signet from him peremptorily,"'

'Ay,' replied Varney, 'said he so, indeed? You know all, then?'

'All — all, and you were as wise to make a friend of me while the weather is fair betwixt us.'

'And was there no one present,' said Varney, 'when my lord so spoke?'

'Not a breathing creature,' replied Lambourne. 'Think you my lord would trust any one with such matters save an approved man of action like myself?'

'Most true,' said Varney, and, making a pause, he looked forward on the moonlight road. They were traversing a wide and open heath. The litter, being at least a mile before them, was both out of sight and hearing. He looked behind, and there was an expanse, lighted by the moonbeams, without one human being in sight. He resumed his speech to Lambourne. 'And will you turn upon your master, who has introduced you to this career of court-like favour — whose apprentice you have been, Michael — who has taught you the depths and shallows of court intrigue?'

'Michael not me!' said Lambourne, 'I have a name will brook a *master* before it as well as another, and as to the rest, if I have been an apprentice, my indenture is out, and I am resolute to set up for myself.'

'Take thy quittance first, thou fool!' said Varney, and with a pistol, which he had for some time held in his hand, shot Lambourne through the body.

The wretch fell from his horse without a single groan, and Varney, dismounting, rifled his pockets, turning out the lining, that it might appear he had fallen by robbers. He secured the earl's packet, which was his chief object, but he also took Lambourne's purse, containing some gold pieces, the relics of what his debauchery had left him, and, from a singular combination of feelings, carried it in his hand only the length of a small river which crossed the road, into which he threw it as far as he could fling. Such are the strange remnants of conscience which remain after she seems totally subdued, that this cruel and remorseless man would have felt himself degraded had he pocketed the few pieces belonging to the wretch whom he had thus ruthlessly slain.

The murderer reloaded his pistol, after cleansing the lock and barrel from the appearances of late explosion, and rode calmly after the litter, satisfying himself that he had so adroitly removed a troublesome witness to many of his intrigues, and the bearer of mandates which he had no intentions to obey, and which, therefore, he was desirous it should be thought had never reached his hand.

The remainder of the journey was made with a degree of speed which showed the little care they had for the health of the unhappy countess. They paused only at places where all was under their command, and where the tale they were prepared to tell of the insane Lady Varney would have obtained ready credit had she made an attempt to appeal to the compassion of the few persons admitted to see her. But Amy saw no chance of obtaining a hearing from any to whom she had an opportunity of addressing herself, and, besides, was too terrified for the presence of Varney to violate the implied condition under which she was to travel free from his company. The authority of Varney, often so used during the earl's private journeys to Cumnor, readily procured relays of horses where wanted, so that they approached Cumnor Place upon the night after they left Kenilworth.

At this period of the journey, Varney came up to the rear

of the litter, as he had done before repeatedly during their progress, and asked, 'What does she?'

'She sleeps,' said Foster 'I would we were home, her strength is exhausted'

'Rest will restore her,' answered Varney 'She shall soon sleep sound and long, we must consider how to lodge her in safety'

'In her own apartments, to be sure,' said Foster. 'I have sent Janet to her aunt's, with a proper rebuke, and the old women are truth itself, for they hate this lady cordially'

'We will not trust them, however, friend Anthony,' said Varney, 'we must secure her in that stronghold where you keep your gold'

'My gold!' said Anthony, much alarmed, 'why, what gold have I?' God help me, I have no gold — I would I had'

'Now, marry hang thee, thou stupid brute, who thinks of, or cares for, thy gold? If I did, could I not find an hundred better ways to come at it? In one word, thy bedchamber, which thou hast fenced so curiously, must be her place of seclusion, and thou, thou hind, shalt press her pillows of down. I dare to say the earl will never ask after the rich furniture of these four rooms'

This last consideration rendered Foster tractable, he only asked permission to ride before, to make matters ready, and, spurring his horse, he posted before the litter, while, Varney falling about threescore paces behind it, it remained only attended by Tider

When they had arrived at Cumnor Place, the countess asked eagerly for Janet, and showed much alarm when informed that she was no longer to have the attendance of that amiable girl

'My daughter is dear to me, madam,' said Foster, gruffly, 'and I desire not that she should get the court tricks of lying and 'scaping, somewhat too much of that has she learned already, an it please your ladyship'

The countess, much fatigued and greatly terrified by the circumstances of her journey, made no answer to this insolence, but mildly expressed a wish to retire to her chamber

'Ay — ay,' muttered Foster, 'tis but reasonable, but under favour, you go not to your gew-gaw toy-house yonder, you will sleep to-night in better security'

'I would it were in my grave,' said the countess, 'but that mortal feelings shiver at the idea of soul and body parting'

'You, I guess, have no chance to shiver at that,' replied

Foster 'My lord comes hither to-morrow, and doubtless you will make your own ways good with him'

'But does he come hither? — does he indeed, good Foster?'

'Oh ay, good Foster!' replied the other 'But what Foster shall-I be to-morrow, when you speak of me to my lord, though all I have done was to obey his own orders?'

'You shall be my protector — a rough one, indeed, but still a protector,' answered the countess. 'Oh, that Janet were but here!'

'She is better where she is,' answered Foster, 'one of you is enough to perplex a plain head, but will you taste any refreshment?'

'Oh no — no, my chamber — my chamber I trust,' she said, apprehensively, 'I may secure it on the inside?'

'With all my heart,' answered Foster, 'so I may secure it on the outside', and taking a light, he led the way to a part of the building where Amy had never been, and conducted her up a stair of great height, preceded by one of the old women with a lamp. At the head of the stair, which seemed of almost immeasurable height, they crossed a short wooden gallery, formed of black oak, and very narrow, at the farther end of which was a strong oaken door, which opened and admitted them into the miser's apartment, homely in its accommodations in the very last degree, and, except in name, little different from a prison room.

Foster stopped at the door and gave the lamp to the countess, without either offering or permitting the attendance of the old woman who had carried it. The lady stood not on ceremony, but taking it hastily, barred the door, and secured it with the ample means provided on the inside for that purpose.

Varney, meanwhile, had lurked behind on the stairs, but hearing the door barred, he now came up on tiptoe, and Foster, winking to him, pointed with self complacency to a piece of concealed machinery in the wall, which, playing with much ease and little noise, dropped a part of the wooden gallery, after the manner of a drawbridge, so as to cut off all communication between the door of the bedroom, which he usually inhabited, and the landing-place of the high winding stair which ascended to it. The rope by which this machinery was wrought was generally carried within the bedchamber, it being Foster's object to provide against invasion from without, but now that it was intended to secure the prisoner within, the cord had been brought over to the landing-place, and was there

made fast, when Foster, with much complacency, had dropped the unsuspected trap-door

Varney looked with great attention at the machinery, and peeped more than once down the abyss which was opened by the fall of the trap-door. It was dark as pitch, and seemed profoundly deep, going, as Foster informed his confederate in a whisper, nigh to the lowest vault of the castle. Varney cast once more a fixed and long look down into this sable gulf, and then followed Foster to the part of the manor-house most usually inhabited.

When they arrived in the parlour which we have mentioned, Varney requested Foster to get them supper and some of the choicest wine. 'I will seek Alasco,' he added, 'we have work for him to do, and we must put him in good heart.'

Foster groaned at this intimation, but made no remonstrance. The old woman assured Varney that Alasco had scarce eaten or drunken since her master's departure, living perpetually shut up in the laboratory, and talking as if the world's continuance depended on what he was doing there.

'I will teach him that the world hath other claims on him,' said Varney, seizing a light and going in quest of the alchemist. He returned, after a considerable absence, very pale, but yet with his habitual sneer on his cheek and nostril. 'Our friend,' he said, 'has exhaled.'

'How! what mean you?' said Foster. 'Run away—fled with my forty pounds, that should have been multiplied a thousandfold? I will have hue and cry!'

'I will tell thee a surer way,' said Varney.

'How which way?' exclaimed Foster. 'I will have back my forty pounds—I deemed them as surely a thousand times multiplied—I will have back my in-put, at the least.'

'Go hang thyself, then, and sue Alasco in the Devil's Court of Chancery, for thither he has carried the cause.'

'How! What dost thou mean—is he dead?'

'Ay, truly he is,' said Varney, 'and properly swoln already in the face and body. He had been mixing some of his devil's medicines, and the glass mask which he used constantly had fallen from his face, so that the subtle poison entered the brain and did its work.'

'*Sancta Maria!*' said Foster—'I mean, God in his mercy preserve us from covetousness and deadly sin! Had he not had projection, think you? Saw you no ingots in the crucibles?'

'Nay, I looked not but at the dead carrion,' answered Varney.

—‘an ugly spectacle he was swoln like a corpse three days exposed on the wheel. Pah! give me a cup of wine.’

‘I will go,’ said Foster, ‘I will examine myself——’ He took the lamp and hastened to the door, but there hesitated and paused. ‘Will you not go with me?’ said he to Varney

‘To what purpose?’ said Varney, ‘I have seen and smelled enough to spoil my appetite. I broke the window, however, and let in the air, it reeked of sulphur and such-like suffocating steams, as if the very devil had been there’

‘And might it not be the act of the demon himself?’ said Foster, still hesitating, ‘I have heard he is powerful at such times, and with such people’

‘Still, if it *were* that Satan of thine,’ answered Varney, ‘who thus jades thy imagination, thou art in perfect safety, unless he is a most unconscionable devil indeed. He hath had two good sops of late.’

‘How, *two* sops — what mean you?’ said Foster — ‘what mean you?’

‘You will know in time,’ said Varney ‘And then this other banquet, but thou wilt esteem her too choice a morsel for the fiend’s tooth she must have her psalms, and harps, and seraphs.’

Anthony Foster heard, and came slowly back to the table ‘God! Sir Richard, and must that then be done?’

‘Ay, in very truth, Anthony, or there comes no copyhold in thy way,’ replied his inflexible associate

‘I always foresaw it would land there!’ said Foster, ‘but how, Sir Richard — how? for not to win the world would I put hands on her’

‘I cannot blame thee,’ said Varney ‘I should be reluctant to do that myself, we miss Alasco and his manna sorely — ay, and the dog Lambourne.’

‘Why, where tarries Lambourne?’ said Anthony

‘Ask no questions,’ said Varney, ‘thou wilt see him one day, if thy creed be true. But to our graver matter I will teach thee a springe, Tony, to catch a pewit, yonder trap door — yonder gimcrack of thine, will remain secure in appearance, will it not, though the supports are withdrawn beneath?’

‘Ay, marry, will it, said Foster, ‘so long as it is not trodden on’

‘But were the lady to attempt an escape over it,’ replied Varney, ‘her weight would carry it down?’

‘A mouse’s weight would do it,’ said Foster

'Why, then, she dies in attempting her escape, and what could you or I help it, honest 'Tony? Let us to bed, we will adjust our project to-morrow'

On the next day, when evening approached, Varney summoned Foster to the execution of their plan. 'Tider and Foster's old man-servant were sent on a feigned errand down to the village, and Anthony himself, as if anxious to see that the countess suffered no want of accommodation, visited her place of confinement. He was so much staggered at the mildness and patience with which she seemed to endure her confinement, that he could not help earnestly recommending to her not to cross the threshold of her room on any account whatever until Lord Leicester should come, 'Which,' he added, 'I trust in God, will be very soon.' Amy patiently promised that she would resign herself to her fate, and Foster returned to his hardened companion with his conscience half-eased of the perilous load that weighed on it. 'I have warned her,' he said, 'surely in vain is the snare set in sight of any bird!'

He left, therefore, the countess's door unsecured on the outside, and, under the eye of Varney, withdrew the supports which sustained the falling trap, which, therefore, kept its level position merely by a slight adhesion. They withdrew to wait the issue on the ground-floor adjoining, but they waited long in vain. At length Varney, after walking long to and fro, with his face muffled in his cloak, threw it suddenly back, and exclaimed, 'Surely never was a woman fool enough to neglect so fair an opportunity of escape!'

'Perhaps she is resolved,' said Foster, 'to await her husband's return.'

'True!—most true,' said Varney, rushing out, 'I had not thought of that before.'

In less than two minutes, Foster, who remained behind, heard the tread of a horse in the courtyard, and then a whistle similar to that which was the earl's usual signal, the instant after the door of the countess's chamber opened, and in the same moment the trap-door gave way. There was a rushing sound—a heavy fall—a faint groan—and all was over.

At the same instant, Varney called in at the window, in an accent and tone which was an indescribable mixture betwixt horror and raillery—'Is the bird caught?—is the deed done?'

'O God, forgive us!' replied Anthony Foster.

'Why, thou fool,' said Varney, 'thy toil is ended, and thy reward secure. Look down into the vault—what seest thou?'

'I see only a heap of white clothes, like a snowdrift,' said Foster 'O God, she moves her arm!'

'Hurl something down on her — thy gold chest, Tony — it is an heavy one.'

'Varney, thou art an incarnate fiend!' replied Foster 'There needs nothing more — she is gone!'

'So pass our troubles,' said Varney, entering the room. 'I dreamed not I could have mimicked the earl's call so well'

'Oh, if there be judgment in Heaven, thou hast deserved it,' said Foster, 'and wilt meet it! 'Thou hast destroyed her by means of her best affections It is a seething of the kid in the mother's milk!'

'Thou art a fanatical ass,' replied Varney 'Let us now think how the alarm should be given, the body is to remain where it is.'

But their wickedness was to be permitted no longer, for, even while they were at this consultation, Tressilian and Raleigh broke in upon them, having obtained admittance by means of Tider and Foster's servant, whom they had secured at the village.

Anthony Foster fled on their entrance, and, knowing each corner and pass of the intricate old house, escaped all search. But Varney was taken on the spot, and, instead of expressing compunction for what he had done, seemed to take a fiendish pleasure in pointing out to them the remains of the murdered countess, while at the same time he defied them to show that he had any share in her death. The despairing grief of Tressilian, on viewing the mangled and yet warm remains of what had lately been so lovely and so beloved, was such that Raleigh was compelled to have him removed from the place by force, while he himself assumed the direction of what was to be done.

Varney, upon a second examination, made very little mystery either of the crime or of its motives, alleging, as a reason for his frankness, that though much of what he confessed could only have attached to him by suspicion, yet such suspicion would have been sufficient to deprive him of Leicester's confidence, and to destroy all his towering plans of ambition. 'I was not born,' he said, 'to drag on the remainder of life a degraded outcast, nor will I so die that my fate shall make a holiday to the vulgar herd.'

From these words it was apprehended he had some design upon himself, and he was carefully deprived of all means by which such could be carried into execution. But, like some of

the heroes of antiquity, he carried about his person a small quantity of strong poison, prepared probably by the celebrated Demetrius Alasco Having swallowed this potion over-night, he was found next morning dead in his cell, nor did he appear to have suffered much agony, his countenance presenting, even in death, the habitual expression of sneering sarcasm which was predominant while he lived 'The wicked man,' saith Scripture, 'hath no bonds in his death.'

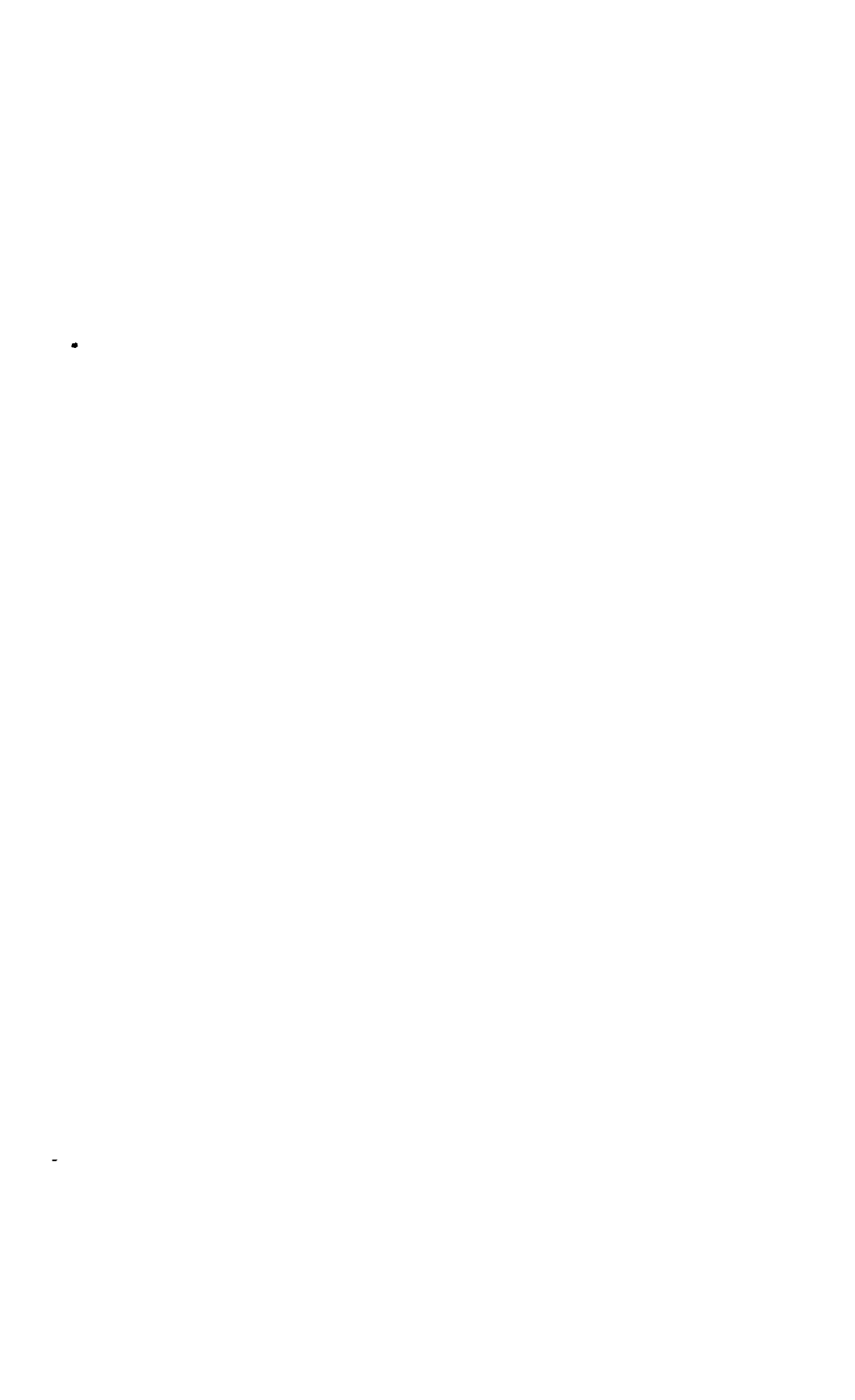
The fate of his colleague in wickedness was long unknown. Cumnor Place was deserted immediately after the murder, for, in the vicinity of what was called the Lady Dudley's chamber the domestics pretended to hear groans, and screams, and other supernatural noises After a certain length of time, Janet, hearing no tidings of her father, became the uncontrolled mistress of his property, and conferred it with her hand upon Wayland, now a man of settled character, and holding a place in Elizabeth's household But it was after they had been both dead for some years, that their eldest son and heir, in making some researches about Cumnor Hall, discovered a secret passage, closed by an iron door, which, opening from behind the bed in the Lady Dudley's chamber, descended to a sort of cell, in which they found an iron chest containing a quantity of gold, and a human skeleton stretched above it The fate of Anthony Foster was now manifest He had fled to this place of concealment, forgetting the key of the spring-lock, and being barred from escape by the means he had used for preservation of that gold for which he had sold his salvation, he had there perished miserably Unquestionably the groans and screams heard by the domestics were not entirely imaginary, but were those of this wretch, who, in his agony, was crying for relief and succour.

The news of the countess's dreadful fate put a sudden period to the pleasures of Kenilworth. Leicester retired from court, and for a considerable time abandoned himself to his remorse But as Varney, in his last declaration, had been studious to spare the character of his patron, the earl was the object rather of compassion than resentment The Queen at length recalled him to court, he was once more distinguished as a statesman and favourite, and the rest of his career is well known to history But there was something retributive in his death, if, according to an account very generally received, it took place from his swallowing a draught of poison which was designed by him for another person¹

¹ See Death of the Earl of Leicester Note 20.

Sir Hugh Robsart died very soon after his daughter, having settled his estate on Tressilian. But neither the prospect of rural independence nor the promises of favour which Elizabeth held out to induce him to follow the court, could remove his profound melancholy. Wherever he went, he seemed to see before him the disfigured corpse of the early and only object of his affection. At length, having made provision for the maintenance of the old friends and old servants who formed Sir Hugh's family at Ladcote Hall, he himself embarked with his friend Raleigh for the Virginia expedition, and, young in years but old in grief, died before his day in that foreign land.

Of inferior persons it is only necessary to say, that Blount's wit grew brighter as his yellow roses faded, that, doing his part as a brave commander in the wars, he was much more in his element than during the short period of his following the court, and that Flibbertigibbet's acute genius raised him to favour and distinction in the employment both of Burleigh and Cecil.



NOTES TO KENILWORTH

NOTE 1 — CUMNOR HALL, p x

In a valuable work, by Mr Adlard on *Amy Robsart the Earl of Leicester and Kenilworth* 8vo London 1870 the author says [pp 24 25] that Cumnor Place was originally one of the country seats of the abbots of Abingdon and that, on the dissolution of the monasteries it was granted by Henry VIII to his physician George Owen At Owen's death in 1561, it was bought by Anthony Forster and was occupied by him for several years and at his demise it passed into the hands of the Earl of Leicester The Place ultimately became the property of Lord Abingdon

For a long period' says Mr Adlard Cumnor was deserted the recollection of Amy Dudley's melancholy end was revived amongst the ignorant villagers, whose imaginations conjured up forms and horrors before unheard of and hence arose the legendary tales that have descended to the present day Decay followed fast on desertion and with the aid of the wanton and mischievous, before a century had rolled away it had become almost a ruin

'A few fine elms scattered here and there are all that is left to aid in realising the former picturesque appearance of this retreat where we are privileged to sympathise with suffering innocence and blighted affection'

The ballad of Cumnor Hall as stated in the Introduction, appeared, now first printed in Evans's *Collection of Old Ballads* vol iv p 130 1784 and in the new edition (the editor discarding the antique mode of spelling) vol iv p 94 1810 In this form it is given above. The author, William Julius Mickle was a son of the minister of Langholm in Dumfriesshire where he was born in 1734 and died at London in 1788 He is now chiefly known by his translation from Camoens of the *Lusiad* (*Laing*)

NOTE 2 — FOSTER, LAMBOURNE AND THE BLACK BEAR, p 30

If faith is to be put in epitaphs, Anthony Foster was something the very reverse of the character represented in the novel Ashmole gives this description of his tomb — I copy from the *Antiquities of Berkshire*, vol 1. p 143

In the north wall of the chancel at Cumnor Church is a monument of grey marble, whereon, in brass plates, are engraved a man in armour and his wife in the habit of her times, both kneeling before a fald-stoole together with the figures of three sons kneeling behind their mother Under the figure of the man is this inscription

ANTONIUS FOSTER, generis generosa propago,
Cumnera Dominus Bercheriensis erat.
Armiger, Armigero prognatus patre Ricardo,
Qui quondam Iphletas Salopiensis erat.
Quatuor ex isto fluxerunt stemmate nati,
Ex isto Antonius stemmate quartus erat.

Mente sagax, animo precellens, corpore promptus,
 Eloqui dulcis, ore di artus erat
 In factis probitas, fuit in sermone venustas,
 In vultu gravitas, religione fides,
 In patrium pietas, in agnos grata voluntas,
 Accedunt reliquis annumeranda bona
 Si quod cuncta rapit, rapuit non omnia Lethum,
 Si quod Mors rapuit, vivida fama dedit

‘These verses following are writ at length, two by two, in praise of him.

Argute resonas Clithare pretendere chordas
 Novit, et Aonia concerepuisse Lyra.
 Gaudebat terre teneras defigere plantas,
 Et mira pulchras construere arte domos,
 Composita varias lingua formare loquelas
 Doctus, et edocta scribere multa manu.

‘The arms over it thus

Quart { I 3 *Hunter's horns* stringed
 II 3 *Phylons* with their points upwards

‘The crest is a *stag* couchant, vulnerated through the neck by a broad arrow, on his side is a *mantlett* for a difference’

From this monumental inscription it appears that Anthony Forster, instead of being a vulgar, low-bred, Puritanical churl, was in fact a gentleman of birth and consideration, distinguished for his skill in the arts of music and horticulture, as also in languages. In so far, therefore, the Anthony Foster of the romance has nothing but the name in common with the real individual. But, notwithstanding the charity, benevolence, and religious faith imputed by the monument of grey marble to its tenant, tradition, as well as secret history, name him as the active agent in the death of the countess, and it is added, that from being a jovial and convivial gallant, as we may infer from some expressions in the epitaph, he sunk, after the fatal deed, into a man of gloomy and retired habits, whose looks and manners indicated that he suffered under the pressure of some atrocious secret.

The name of Lambourne is still known in the vicinity, and it is said some of the clan partake the habits, as well as name, of the Michael Lambourne of the romance. A man of this name lately murdered his wife, outdoing Michael in this respect, who only was concerned in the murder of the wife of another man.

I have only to add, that the jolly Black Bear has been restored to his predominance over bowl and bottle, in the village of Cumnor.

NOTE 3 — MARTIN SWART, p 92

The first verse, or something similar, occurs in a long ballad, or poem, on Flodden Field, reprinted by the late Henry Weber —

See Weber's Notes in the above volume, p 182 (*Lainig*)

The second verse, from an old song, *actually* occurs in an old play, where the singer boasts —

Courteously I can both counter and knock
 Of Martin Swart and all his merry-men.

NOTE 4 — LEGEND OF WAYLAND SMITH, p 144

The great defeat given by Alfred to the Danish invaders is said, by Mr Gough, to have taken place near Ashdown, in Berkshire. ‘The burial-place of Bæreg, the Danish chief, who was slain in this fight, is distinguished

by a parcel of stones, less than a mile from the hill set on edge inclosing a piece of ground somewhat raised. On the east side of the southern extremity stand three squarish flat stones of about four or five feet over either way, supporting a fourth and now called by the vulgar *Wayland Smith* from an idle tradition about an invisible smith replacing lost horse-shoes there.' — Gough's Edition of Camden's *Britannia* vol 1 p 221

The popular belief still retains memory of this wild legend which connected as it is with the site of a Danish sepulchre, may have arisen from some legend concerning the northern Duerger who resided in the rocks and were cunning workers in steel and iron. It was believed that Wayland Smith's fee was sixpence, and that, unlike other workmen he was offended if more was offered. Of late his offices have again been called to memory but fiction has in this, as in other cases, taken the liberty to pillage the stores of oral tradition. This monument must be very ancient, for it has been kindly pointed out to me that it is referred to in an ancient Saxon charter as a landmark. The monument has been of late cleared out, and made considerably more conspicuous —

The Vale of the Whitehorse derives its name from the figure of a horse which has been described on the hillside at this place the turf having been removed from the chalky soil in such a way as to show at a distance the form of a white horse. This figure is supposed to have been cut out during the Saxon period to celebrate some victory. On certain occasions the white horse is scoured or repaired by the peasantry of the neighbourhood, who turn out in large numbers and remove any turf that may have settled itself on the figure of the horse (*Laing*)

NOTE 5 — ORVIETAN, p 140

Orvietan, or Venice trencle, as it was sometimes called was understood to be a sovereign remedy against poison and the reader must be contented for the time he peruses these pages, to hold the same opinion, which was once universally received by the learned as well as the vulgar

NOTE 6 — LEICESTER AND SUSSEX, p 152

Naunton gives us numerous and curious particulars of the jealous struggle which took place between Ratcliffe Earl of Sussex and the rising favourite Leicester. The former when on his death bed predicted to his followers that, after his death the gipsy (so he called Leicester from his dark complexion) would prove too many for them

NOTE 7 — SIR WALTER RALEIGH p 155

Among the attendants and adherents of Sussex, we have ventured to introduce the celebrated Raleigh, in the dawn of his court favour

In Aubrey's *Correspondence* there are some curious particulars of Sir Walter Raleigh. He was a tall handsome bold man but his nœve was that he was damnably proud. Old Sir Robert Harley of Brampton Bryan Castle who knew him, would say it was a great question who was the proudest Sir Walter or Sir Thomas Overbury but the difference that was was judged in Sir Thomas's side. In the great parlour at Downton at Mr Raleigh's, is a good piece, an original of Sir Walter in a white satin doublet, all embroidered with rich pearls, and a mighty rich chain of great pearls about his neck. The old servants have told me that the pearls were near as big as the painted ones. He had a most remarkable aspect, an exceeding high forehead, long faced and sour-eyed. A rebus is added, to this purpose

'The enemy to the stomach, and the word of disgrace,
Is the name of the gentleman with a bold face'

Sir Walter Raleigh's beard turned up naturally, which gave him an advantage over the gallants of the time, whose mustachios received a touch of the barber's art to give them the air then most admired — See Aubrey's *Correspondence*, vol II part II p 500

NOTE 8 — COURT FAVOUR OF SIR WALTER RALEIGH, p. 109

The gallant incident of the cloak is the traditional account of this celebrated statesman's rise at court. None of Elizabeth's courtiers knew better than he how to make his court to her personal vanity, or could more justly estimate the quantity of flattery which she could condescend to swallow. Being confined in the Tower for some offence, and understanding the Queen was about to pass to Greenwich in her barge, he insisted on approaching the window, that he might see, at whatever distance, the queen of his affections, the most beautiful object which the earth bore on its surface. The lieutenant of the Tower (his own particular friend) threw himself between his prisoner and the window, while Sir Walter, apparently influenced by a fit of unrestrainable passion, swore he would not be debarred from seeing his light, his life, his goddess! A scuffle ensued, *got up* for effect's sake, in which the lieutenant and his captive grappled and struggled with fury, tore each other's hair, and at length drew daggers, and were only separated by force. The Queen being informed of this scene exhibited by her frantic adorer, it wrought, as was to be expected, much in favour of the captive Paladin. There is little doubt that his quarrel with the lieutenant was entirely contrived for the purpose which it produced.

NOTE 9 — ROBERT LANEHAM, p. 196

Little is known of Robert Laneham, save in his curious letter to a friend in London, giving an account of Queen Elizabeth's entertainments at Kenilworth, written in a style of the most intolerable affectation, both in point of composition and orthography. He describes himself as a *bon vivant*, who was wont to be jolly and dry in the morning, and by his good-will would be chiefly in the company of the ladies. He was, by the interest of Lord Leicester, clerk of the council-chamber door, and also keeper of the same. 'When council sits,' says he, 'I am at hand. If any makes a babbling, "Peace," say I. If I see a listener or a pryer in at the chinks or lockhole, I am presently on the bones of him. If a friend comes, I make him sit down by me on a form or chest. The rest may walk, a God's name!' There has been seldom a better portrait of the pragmatic conceit and self-importance of a small man in office. [Compare Note 16.]

NOTE 10 — SCOTTISH WILD CATTLE, p. 209

A remnant of the wild cattle of Scotland are preserved at Chillingham Castle, near Wooler, in Northumberland, the seat of Lord Tankerville. They fly before strangers, but if disturbed and followed, they turn with fury on those who persist in annoying them. [See also *Bride of Lammermoor*, chap v, and a note to *Castle Dangerous*.]

NOTE 11 — DR JULIO, p. 222

The Earl of Leicester's Italian physician, Julio, was affirmed by his contemporaries to be a skilful compounder of poisons, which he applied with such frequency that the Jesuit Parsons extols ironically the marvellous

good luck of this great favourite in the opportune deaths of those who stood in the way of his wishes. There is a curious passage on the subject —

'Long after this, he fell in love with the Lady Sheffield, whom I signified before, and then also had he the same fortune to have her husband dye quickly, with an extreame rheume in his head (as it was given out) but as others say of an artificiall catarre that stopped his breath. The like good chance had he in the death of my Lord of Essex (as I have said before), and that at a time most fortunate for his purpose, for when he was coming home from Ireland, with intent to revenge himselfe upon my Lord of Leicester for begetting his wife with childe in his absence (the childe was a daughter and brought up by the Lady Shandoes W. Knooles his wife) my Lord of Leicester hearing thereof wanted not a friend or two to accompany the deputy, as among other a couple of the Earles own servants Crompton (if I misse not his name), yeoman of his bottles, and Lloid his secretary, entertained afterward by my Lord of Leicester and so he dyed in the way of an extreame flux, caused by an Italian receipe as all his friends are well assured, the maker whereof was a chyurgeon (as it is beleaved) that then was newly come to my Lord from Italy—a cunning man and sure in operation with whom, if the good Lady had been sooner acquainted and used his help, she should not have needed to sitten so pensive at home, and fearfull of her husband's former returne out of the same country. Neither must you marvaille though all these died in divers manners of outward diseases, for this is the excellency of the Italian art, for which this chyurgeon and Dr Jullo were entertained so carefully who can make a man dye in what manner or show of sickness you will by whose instructions no doubt but his lordship is now cunning, especially adding also to these the counsell of his Doctor Bayly a man also not a little studied (as he seemeth) in his art for I heard him once myselfe, in a publique act in Oxford (and that in presence of my Lord of Leicester if I be not deceived) maintain that poyson might be so tempered and given as it should not appear presently, and yet should kill the party afterward at what time should be appointed which argument belike pleased well his lordship and therefore was chosen to be discussed in his audience if I be not deceived of his being that day present. So, though one dye of a flux and another of a catarre yet this importeth little to the matter but sheweth rather the great cunning and skill of the artificer — Parson's *Leicester's Commonwealth*, p. 23

It is unnecessary to state the numerous reasons why the earl is stated in the tale to be rather the dupe of villains than the unprincipled author of their atrocities. In the latter capacity which a part at least of his contemporaries imputed to him he would have made a character too disgustingly wicked to be useful for the purposes of fiction.

I have only to add, that the union of the poisoner the quacksalver the alchemist, and the astrologer in the same person was familiar to the pretenders to the mystic sciences.

NOTE 12 — PILGRIMS TO KENILWORTH p. 280

Dr. Beattie in his *Castles of England* [vol. i p. 214 1844] says, 'The romance of *Kenilworth* it is probable has brought within the last fifteen years more pilgrims to this town and neighbourhood than ever resorted to its ancient shrine of the Virgin more knights and dames than ever figured in its tilts and tournaments' (*Laird*)

NOTE 13 — AMY ROBERT AT KENILWORTH, p. 295

The historical critic will recognise an obvious anachronism in the Author's account of Amy's visit to Kenilworth Castle. The festivities there

took place in July 1575, several years after the death of the real Amy Dudley. It may be mentioned, however, that during these festivities the Earl of Leicester was living in secret wedlock with Lady Sheffield.

With reference to these historical liberties, see the conclusion to the *Monastery* (*Laing*) [vol x p 374, of this edition]

NOTE 14 — CHOPIN, p 296

The old traveller Coryat, in his amusing work called *Crudities* [vol II p 36], 1611, says the chopin is a thing 'so common in Venice, that no woman whatsoever goeth without it, either in her house or abroad—a thing made of wood, and covered with leather of sundry colors, some with white, some redde, some yellow. It is called a "chapiney," which they weare under their shoes. There are many of these chapineys of a great height, even half a yard high, which maketh many of their women that are very short seeme much taller than the tallest women we have in England' (*Laing*)

NOTE 15 — IMITATION OF GASCOIGNE, p 331

This is an imitation of Gascoigne's verses spoken by the herculean porter, as mentioned in the text. The original may be found in the republication of the *Princely Pleasures of Kenilworth*, by the same author, in the *History of Kenilworth*, already quoted. Chiswick, 1821.

NOTE 16 — FESTIVITIES AT KENILWORTH, p 334

See Laneham's *Account of the Queen's Entertainment at Kenilworth Castle* in 1575, a very diverting tract, written by as great a coxcomb as ever blotted paper. [See Note 9 above.] The original is extremely rare, but it has been twice reprinted, once in Mr Nichols's very curious and interesting collection of the *Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, vol I, and more lately in a beautiful antiquarian publication termed *Kenilworth Illustrated*, printed at Chiswick for Meridew of Coventry and Radcliffe of Birmingham. It contains reprints of Laneham's *Letter*, Gascoigne's *Princely Progress*, and other scarce pieces, annotated with accuracy and ability. The Author takes the liberty to refer to this work as his authority for the account of the festivities.

I am indebted for a curious ground-plan of the castle of Kenilworth, as it existed in Queen Elizabeth's time, to the voluntary kindness of Richard Badnall, Esq of Olivebank, near Liverpool. From his obliging communication I learn that the original sketch was found among the manuscripts of the celebrated J J Rousseau when he left England. These were intrusted by the philosopher to the care of his friend Mr Davenport, and passed from his legatee into the possession of Mr Badnall.

NOTE 17 — ELIZABETH AND LEICESTER, p 336

To justify what may be considered as a high-coloured picture, the Author quotes the original of the courtly and shrewd Sir James Melville, being then Queen Mary's envoy at the Court of London.

'I was required,' says Sir James, 'to stay till I had seen him made Earle of Leicester and Baron of Denbigh, with great solemnity, herself (Elizabeth) helping to put on his ceremonial, he sitting on his knees before her, keeping a great gravity and a discreet behaviour, but she could not refrain from putting her hand to his neck to kittle (*i e* tickle) him, smilingly, the French ambassador and I standing beside her'—Melville's *Memoirs*, Bannatyne Edition, p 120.

NOTE 18 — ITALIAN POETRY, p 345

The incident alluded to occurs in the poem of *Orlando Innamorato* of Bolardo, libro II canto 4, stanza 25

Non era per ventura, etc.

It may be rendered thus —

As then, perchance, unguarded was the tower,
So enter'd free Anglano's dauntless knight.
No monster and no giant guard the bower
In whose recess reclined the fairy light,
Robed in a loose cymar of lily white,
And on her lap a sword of breadth and might,
In whose broad blade, as in a mirror bright,
Like maid that trims her for a festal night,
The fairy deck'd her hair and placed her coronet aright.

Elizabeth's attachment to the Italian school of poetry was singularly manifested on a well known occasion Her godson Sir John Harrington, having offended her delicacy by translating some of the licentious passages of the *Orlando Furioso* she imposed on him as a penance, the task of rendering the *whole* poem into English

NOTE 19 — FURNITURE OF KENILWORTH, p 348

In revising this work for the present edition I have had the means of making some accurate additions to my attempt to describe the princely pleasures of Kenilworth by the kindness of my friend William Hamper, Esq who had the goodness to communicate to me an inventory of the furniture of Kenilworth in the days of the magnificent Earl of Leicester I have adorned the text with some of the splendid articles mentioned in the inventory but antiquaries, especially will be desirous to see a more full specimen than the story leaves room for

EXTRACTS FROM KENILWORTH INVENTORY, A. D. 1584

A salte, ship-fashion of the mother of perle garnished with silver and divers workes warlike ensignes, and ornaments, with xvj peeces of ordnance, whereof ij on wheles, two anckers on the foreparte and on the stearne the image of Dame Fortune standing on a globe with a flag in her hand. Pols xxxij oz

A glite salte like a swann, mother of perle Pols xxx oz. ij quarters.

A George on horseback, of wood painted and gilt, with a case for knives in the taylor of the horse, and a case for oyster knives in the brest of the dragon.

A green barge-cloth, embroder'd with white lions and beares.

A perfuming pann of silver Pols xix oz.

In the halle. Tabells, long and short, vj Formes, long and short, xliij

HANGINGS

These are minutely specified and consisted of the following subjects, in tapestry and gilt and red leather

Flowers, beasts, and pillars arched Forest worke Historie. Storie of Susanna the Prodigall Childe Saule, Tobie Hercules Lady Fame, Hawking and Hunting Jexabell, Judith and Holofernes David Abraham Sampson, Hippolit, Alexander the Great, Naaman the Assyrian, Jacob, etc

BEDSTEDS, WITH THEIR FURNITURE

These are magnificent and numerous I shall copy, verbatim, the description of what appears to have been one of the best

A bedsted of wallnut-tree, toppe fashion, the pilleis redd and varnished, the ceelor, tester, and single vallance of crimson sattin, paned with a broad border of bone lace of golde and silver The tester richlie embrothered with my Lo armes in a garland of hoppes, roses, and pomegranetts, and lyned with buckerom Fyve curteins of crimson sattin to the same bedsted, striped downe with a bone lace of gold and silver, garnished with buttons and loops of crimson silk and golde, containing xliij bredths of sattin, and one yarde iiij quaiters deepe The celoi, vallance, and curteins lyned with crymson taffata sarsenet.

A crymson sattin counterpointe, quilted and embr with a golde twist, and lyned with redd sarsenet, being in length iiij yards good, and in breadth iiij scant.

A chalse of crymson sattin, suteable

A fayre quilte of crymson sattin, vj breadths, iiij yardes 3 quarters nalle deepe, all lozenged over with silver twist, in the midst a cinquefoile within a garland of tragged staves, fringed rounde aboute with a small fringe of crymson silke, lyned throughe with white fustian

Fyve plumes of cooleed feathers, garnished with bone lace and spangells of goulde and silver, standing in cups¹ knitt all over with goulde, silver, and crymson silk

A carpett for a cupboarde of crymson sattin, embrothered with a border of goulde twist, about iiij parts of it fringed with silk and goulde, lyned with bridges² sattin, in length ij yards, and ij bredths of sattin

There were eleven down beds and ninety feather beds, besides thirty-seven mattresses

CHAYRES, STOOLLES, AND CUSHENS

These were equally splendid with the beds, etc I shall here copy that which stands at the head of the list.

A chaler of crimson velvet, the seate and backe partlie embrothered, with R L in cloth of goulde, the beare and ragged staffe in clothe of silver, garnished with lace and fringe of goulde, silver, and crimson silck The frame covered with velvet, bounde about the edge with goulde lace, and studded with gilte nailles

A square stoole and a foote stoole, of crimson velvet, fringed and garnished suteable

A long cushion of crimson velvet, embr with the ragged staffe in a wreathe of goulde, with my Lo posle 'Droyte et Loyall' written in the same, and the letters R L in clothe of goulde, being garnished with lace, fringe, buttons, and tassels, of gold, silver, and crimson silck, lyned with crimson taff, being in length 1 yard quarter

A square cushion, of the like velvet, embr suteable to the long cushion

CARPETS

There were 10 velvet carpets for tables and windows, 49 Turkey carpets for floors, and 32 cloth carpets One of each I will now specify

A carpett of crimson velvet, richly embr with my Lo posle, beares and ragged staves, etc, of clothe of goulde and silver, garnished upon the seames

¹ Probably on the centre and four corners of the bedstead Four bears and ragged staves occupied a similar position on another of these sumptuous pieces of furniture.

² I.e. Bruges

and aboute with golde lace, fringed accordingle, lyned with crimson tafata sarsenett, being 3 breadths of velvet, one yard 3 quarters long

A great Turquoy carpett, the grounde blew, with a list of yelloe at each end, being in length x yards in bredthe liij yards and quarter

A long carpett of blew clothe, lyned with bridges sattin fringed with blew silck and goulde, in length vj yards lack a quarter, the whole bredth of the clothe

PICTURES

Chiefly described as having curtains.

The Qutene's Majestie (2 great tables) 3 of my Lord. St. Jerome. Lo of Arundell Lord Mathevers. Lord of Pembroke. Counte Egmond. The Queene of Scotts. King Philip The Baker's Daughters The Duke of Ferla. Alexander Magnus. Two Yonge Ladies. Pompea Sabina. Fred D of Saxony Emp Charles k Philip's Wife Prince of Orange and his Wife. Marq of Berges and his Wife. Counte de Horne Count Holstrate. Monar Brederode. Duke Alva Cardinal Grandville Duches of Parma Henrið E. of Pembroke and his young Countess. Countis of Essex. Occacion and Repentance Lord Mowntacute. S Jas Crofts Sir Wr Mildmay Sr Wm. Pickering Edwin Abp of York

A tabell of an historie of men women and children, molden in wax.

A little foulding table of ebanle, garnished with white bone, wherein are written verses with lres of goulde.

A table of my Lord's armes.

Fyve of the plannetts, painted in frames

Twentie-three cardes,¹ or maps of countries

INSTRUMENTS

I shall give two specimens.

An instrument of organs, regalls and virginalls, covered with crimson velvet, and garnished with goulde lace

A fair pair of double virginalls.

CABONETTS

A cabonett of crimson sattin richlie embr with a device of hunting the stagg in goulde, silver, and silck with liij glasses in the topp thereof xvj cupps of flowers made of goulde, silver and silck, in a case of leather, lyned with greene sattin of bridges.

Another of purple velvet. A desk of red leather

A chess board of ebanle, with checkers of christall and other stones layed with silver garnished with beares and ragged staves, and cinquefolles of silver The xxxij men likewyse of christall and other stones sett, the one sort in silver white, the other gilte, in a case glided and lyned with green cotton.

Another of bone and ebanle. A pair of tabells of bone.

A great brason candlestick to hang in the rooffe of the howse, verie fayer and curiously wrought, with xxliij branches xij greate and xij of lesser size, 8 rowlers and ij wings for the spread eagle xxliij socketts for candella, xij greater and xij of a lesser sorte, xxliij sawcers or candle-cupps, of like proporcion to put under the socketts liij images of men and liij of weomen, of brass, verie finely and artificially done

These specimens of Leicester's magnificence may serve to assure the reader that it scarce lay in the power of a modern author to exaggerate the lavish style of expense displayed in the princely pleasures of Kenilworth

¹ I.e. charts.

NOTE 20 — DEATH OF THE EARL OF LEICESTER, p 452

In a curious manuscript copy of the information given by Ben Jonson to Drummond of Hawthornden, as abridged by Sir Robert Sibbald, Leicester's death is ascribed to poison administered as a cordial by his countess, to whom he had given it, representing it to be a restorative in any faintness, in the hope that she herself might be cut off by using it. We have already quoted Jonson's account of this merited stroke of retribution in a note, p ix of Introduction to the present work. It may be here added, that the following satirical epitaph on Leicester occurs in Drummond's *Collection*, but is evidently not of his composition —

EPITAPH ON THE ERLE OF LEISTER

Here lies a valiant warrior,
 Who never drew a sword,
 Here lies a noble courtier,
 Who never kept his word,
 Here lies the Erle of Leister,
 Who govern'd the estates,
 Whom the earth could never living love,
 And the just Heaven now hates. —

See *Archæologia Scotica*, vol iv, and the volume published by the Shakespeare Society, *Notes on Ben Jonson's Conversations*, p 24, 1842 (*Laing*)

GLOSSARY

OF

WORDS, PHRASES, AND ALLUSIONS

- ANYE**, suffer for
- ACCOLADE**, the light touch made with the sword on the shoulder of one who is knighted
- AYATTE**, an evil demon in Mahomedan mythology
- AUGUILLETTE**, lace tag
- ALBUMAZAR**, a famous Arabian astronomer, born in Persia near close of 8th century A. D., wrote *Flores Astrologici* (Augsburg, 1188) and other works on astrology
- ALICANT**, Spanish wine
- ALLAN**, or **ALLEN**, **THOMAS**, mathematician (1541-1632), regarded by the vulgar as a magician
- ALMANS**, Germans
- ALTER EGO**, second self
- AMORET**, the beau-ideal of female beauty in the *Faerie Queene*, Bk. iii.
- AMSTERDAM**, **GREAT SCHOLAR** OF **ERASMUS** was a native not of Amsterdam, but of Rotterdam
- ANAX**, I beg your pardon? presently
- ANGEL**, gold coin = 10s. in Elizabeth's reign
- ANOTHER-GUZAS**, another sort of, kind of
- ANTICLY**, grotesquely
- ARCANUM**, the great secret of the conversation of base metals into gold
- ARGENT**, silver
- ARION**, ancient Greek poet, who, when driven into the sea by envious sailors, was carried to land on a dolphin's back
- ARROW**, e'er a, ever a
- ASCAPART** a giant overcome by Sir Bevis of Hampton (Southampton)
- ASCIAM** **ROGER**, tutor to Elizabeth, and royal secretary to Edward VI. Mary and Elizabeth
- ASPIC**, the asp
- ASTRA REGUT** etc. (p. 213), The stars rule man, but God rules the stars
- A TOWLING** a tolling
- AUTOLYCUS**, a crafty pedlar in *The Winter's Tale*
- AVE MARIA ORA PRO NOBIS**, Hail, Mary, pray for us
- AVIRED** OF, aware of
- BABIES**, TO **LOOK**, small images of oneself reflected in the eyes of another
- BAILLIE**, **HARRY**, OF **TIN** **TABBARD**, mine host of the Tabbard Inn in Southwark where Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims assembled
- BARTHOLOMEW FAIR**, held at West Smithfield London, on 24th August (3d September from 1753), a great cloth market and pleasure fair, illustrated in Ben Jonson's play *Bartholomew Fair*
- BASK**, a plaited skirt, sometimes imitated in mailed armour
- BASTARD**, a sweet Spanish wine, resembling Muscadell
- BEARS**, ARE YOU **TIERED** WITH **YOUR**. A man, disliking a sermon on Elisha and the bears went on the following Sunday to another church but the sermon was on the same subject, leading him to utter exclamation
- BEAR THE HELL**, take the place *comp* the weather, that guides flock
- BELIANIS**, hero of the classic romance, *Don Bel of Greece*
- BELL SAVAGE**, or **I SAUVAGE**, inn in Lu Hill, London. See *tutor*, No. 28
- BELUS** **BEL**, or **BAAL** sun god of the Assy and Babylonians
- BESOGNIO**, worthless fellow
- BITTERN RUMP**, the trumpet-like boom or blittern or butter bun
- BLACK BULL**, perhaps Red Bull, in St. J Street, Smithfield
- haps** the Bull in Blagate Street, both the
- BLACK-JACK**, a large waxed leather, for horse
- BLACK SANCTUS**, a burlesque of the Sanctus of Roman mass
- BOARD OF GREEN CLO**, committee of the household, formed charged with the duty purveyance
- BONA RONA**, a wench, a wanton
- BOON WHIDS**, out, give words
- BOTCHER**, a cobbler, a who does repairs
- BRATCHET**, a little brat
- BRIAREUS**, the hundred armed giant in Greek mythology

BRIDGES SATIN, satin made at Bruges, in Flanders

BRIEL, or **BRIEL**, captured in 1572 by the patriotic 'Beggars of the Sea,' who shortly after were in their turn besieged there by the Spaniards

BURLEIGH AND CECIL, Elizabeth's great statesman William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, and his son, Sir Robert Cecil, whom Elizabeth made Secretary of State in 1596

BUSH OVER THE DOOR, a sign that the house so adorned was an inn

CABALA, a mystic system of mingled philosophy, theology, and magic that originated amongst the Jews of the Middle Ages, **CABALISTS**, alchemists, dealers in magic

CACODEMON, an evil spirit

CALIPOLIS, wife of the Moorish prince in Peele's play, *The Battle of Alcazar*

CALIVER, 16th century musket

CAMERADOES, comrades

CAMICLÉ, shirts

CAPOTAINE, or **CAPOTE**, close-fitting hat

CARDES, charts, maps

CASTING BOTTLE, bottle for sprinkling perfumed waters

CATER-COUSIN, on terms of close intimacy

CATLOWDIE, or **CATLOWDY**, a village in the extreme north of Cumberland

CEELOR, or **CELURE**, bed-hangings, a canopy covering a bed

C'EST L'HOMME QUI, etc (p 133), 'Tis the man who does the fighting and gives counsel

CHARLATANI, charlatans

CHERRY PIT, a game in which cherry-stones are thrown into a hole in the ground

CHOPPI, a high soled shoe, worn in Spain and Italy about 1600

CLART, a mixture of wine, honey, and spices

COCKATRICES, prostitutes

COD'S-HEAD, fool

CÖLERS, unwed

COD'S WOUNDS, God's wounds, a form of oath

COIF, a lady's head-dress

COIL, **HERE'S A**, here's a

to-do, pother, **KEEP A COIL**, make a fuss, ado, about

COLBRAND, a Danish giant slain by Sir Guy of Warwick

COMBUST, astrological term applied to a planet when it is so near to the sun as to be almost burnt up or extinguished

COMPOS VOTI, having accomplished your wish

COMPTER, a prison for debtors London had two in the 16th century, one in the Poultry, the other in Wood Street

CORAGIO, courage

CORDOVAN, Spanish leather

CORINTHAN, a bully, adventurer

COSTARD, the head

COTE, pass, overtake

COUCHER, going to bed

CRICKET, a small, low stool

CROSS, silver coin marked with a cross

CULIS, or **CULLIS**, broth of boiled meat strained

CURETUR JENTACULUM, Look after the breakfast

CUT BOON WHIDS, give good words

CUTTER, bully, sharper, **CUTTER'S LAW**, thieves' law, cutting, swaggering

CYCLOPS, or **CYCLOPES**, the assistants of Vulcan, who laboured in his work-shops in Etna and other volcanoes

CYMAR, a loose, light robe

CYPRUS, **CYPRESS**, or **CIPRUS**, a thin, transparent kind of crape

DAN, a complimentary title, equivalent to Master, sir, common with the old poets

DANDIEPRAT, dwarf, urchin

DEPOSED, debauched

DEE, **DR. JOHN**, a London alchemist, who lived in the reigns from Edward VI. to James I

DEVIL LOOKING OVER LINCOLN, a phrase referring to one of the following—a gar-goyle, shaped like a diabolic figure on a witch's back, near the south porch of the cathedral, a figure of Satan at the east end of the south chapel of the nave, a figure of the devil on the top of Lincoln College, Oxford

DIABLOTIN, little devil, mischievous young imp

DIED WITHOUT HIS SHOES, i. e. in bed

DIFFICILUM, etc. (p 103), endurance of hardships from day to day

DINK, trim, tidy

DIOSYSIUS, the Younger, tyrant of Syracuse, retired after his second expulsion in 343 B.C. to Corinth, where he is said to have earned his living as a schoolmaster

DIEL, thrill, vibrate

DOLE See Happy man be his dole

DOUSE, blow, stroke

DRAP-DE BURE, or **BURE**, coarse woollen stuff

DUDMAN AND RAMHEAD, two capes, 20 miles apart, on the Cornish coast, which of course can never meet

DUERGAR, or **DYERGER**, the dwarfs of Scandinavian mythology and folklore

DUKE OF NORFOLK'S AFFAIR. Thomas Howard, 4th Duke, was beheaded in 1572 for treasonable plotting in behalf of Mary Queen of Scots and the Roman Catholic interest

ELECTUARY, a medicine, consisting of powders, etc., mixed with honey or syrup, and licked by the patient

ELL-WAND, measuring-rod an ell long

ERASMUS AB DÏE FAUSTO, Erasmus de Holiday

ERGO, **HEUS**, etc (p 106), So ho there, Richard, my pupil, come hither, I pray thee

ET SIC DE CÆTERIS, and so on with the rest

EUMENIDES, **STYGIUMQUE NEFAS**, the Furies and the Stygian monster

EXCALIBUR, famous sword of King Arthur

EX NOMINE, etc (p 103). From whose name is derived the common word 'gibberish'

EYE, BY THE, in abundance

FABER FERRARIUS, blacksmith

FAITOUR, rogue, hypocrite

FALD-STOOLE, a folding stool or chair, camp-stool

FALL BACK, **FALL EDGE**, come what may

FARCY, a disease of horses

FATIDICÆ, those who predict fate

FAYTE LINGUI, keep silence
FELIX BIS TERQUE, twice, yea,
three times fortunate

FERRATKEN, perhaps **FER**
RANDIN, a kind of poplin,
perhaps **HARRATKEN**, a
coarse woollen cloth

FESTINA LENTE, make haste
slowly, don't be impatient
FLAW, a sudden and violent
wind-storm

FLIGHT-SHOT, bowshot
FOGNUM HARET IN CORNU, It
has hay wrapped about its
horns—a proverbial ex-
pression for a dangerous
fellow

FORTUNE, THE, a theatre in
Aldersgate, London,
opened about 1600, after
the time of this novel

FOUR-NOOKED, four-cornered
FOX, an old name for the
broadsword

FOXES AND **FIREBRANDS**,
or a *Specimen of the
Danger and Harmony of
Popey and Separation*
(1682), in verse, author not
positively known

FRIPPERY, old clothes
FURENS QUID **FEMINA**, what
a frenzied woman (can do)
FURMITT, hulled wheat or
rice boiled in milk, and
seasoned with currants,
raisins, etc.

FUSILLE, or **FUSIL**, an elong-
ated lozenge, term in
heraldry

GALLIARD, lively, jaunty
GALLOON, worsted lace
GAMBRAS, gambol, curvet
GAUDET **WOMINE** **SIBYLLE**,
She rejoices in the name
of Sibyl

GAZE, to look attentively
upon

GAZE-BOUND, greyhound

GEAR, affair, thing, business
GESEK, a famous Arabian
alchemist of the 8th
century

GENETHIACALLY, by calcu-
lating nativities

GILLIAN, **RARE**. See **Rare**
Gillian of Croydon

GLOVE, THE, a theatre on the
south bank of the Thames
between London and
Blackfriars Bridge

GOGGMOUSE, a similar corrup-
tion to Cog's wounds (q v)

GOLD BY THE MYE, money in
plenty, gold in abundance
GOLDEN ORIMONS, etc (p.
193), quoted from *Macbeth*,

Act. i sc. 7, Shakespeare
is therefore alluded to

GOODJENS, or **GOOJERS**, a
coarse expletive, the pox!

GRAVE MAURICUS, Count
Maurice of Nassau, second
son and successor of Wil-
liam of Orange as Governor
of the Netherlands

GROAT, silver coin worth 4d.

GROGRAM, or **GROGRAIN**, a
texture of silk and mohair
or silk and wool, stiffened
with gum

GROYNE (THE), old name for
Corunna in Spain

HALGAYER, MAYOR OF See
Mayor of Halgayer

HALI OF ALIBEN ARKIN **RAKIL**,
an Arab astrologer of the
11th century, wrote *De
Judicis Astrorum*
(Venice, 1485)

HANDSEL, earnest-money of
a bargain

HAPPY MAN BE HIS DOLE, may
his lot be that of a happy
man

HARO, an old Norman cry
for help

HARROWTRY, heraldry

HARRY MORLE. See **Noble**

HARUSPICES, soothsayers,
diviners

HAYS, or **HAY**, a country
dance, danced in a ring

HEAD-BOROUGH, head of a
borough, petty constable

HEART-SPONE, the depression
in the breast-bone, the
breast-bone

HERMETIC, relating to al-
chemy, astrology magic

HILDING, a mean, worthless
wretch

HOCKTIDE, second Tuesday
after Easter day

HOIST, to hoist, lift

HOLDED UP, embarrassed, in
a pickle

HORSE-COURSEER, dealer in
horses

HOSPITIUM, inn, tavern

HUNSDON, LORD, was Eliza-
beth's first cousin, being
the son of her mother's
sister

INCONTINENT, immediately

IN CUIRRO in plain undress,
without cloak, naked

INDA MIRA, more correctly
INDAMORA, the heroine of
Dryden's tragedy *Iur-
ung ebe*

IN FUMO, in smoke

INGLE, favourite, intimate

IN HERUM NATURA, as an
actual fact

IPHYCLUS, one of the Ar-
gonauts, and owner of
large herds of cattle, quid
hoc, etc (p. 102), is a
proverbial phrase of un-
certain origin

IVY-TOD, ivy bush

JAPE, jest, trick
JOWRING, scolding, cursing
JUVENAL, a youth

KA ME KA THEE, Help me,
and I'll help you

KEEP A CONE. See **Coll**

KENNEL, the gutter

KERNES, light-armed foot-
soldiers

KING CAMBYSES'S VEIN, i.e.
blustering and bullying
The original character
figures in Elkanah Settle's
Cambyzes, King of Persia
(1671)

LACHRYMÆ (CHRISTI), red
Italian wine, grown on the
slopes of Mt. Vesuvius

LACS D'AMOUR, LAQUER
AMORIS, love anares

LARGESSE, etc. (p. 348), Your
gifts, your gifts, bold
knights

LEFT HANDED, morganatic
LEVANTINE, easterly Mediter-
ranean wind

LEX JULIA, law of the Roman
Emperor Augustus, de-
signed to promote marriage
and punish adultery

LIMBES, supple, pliant

LINDARIDES, heroine in the
Spanish romance of *The
Mirror of Knighthood*,
a kept mistress

LINGUÆ LATINÆ, etc. (p.
99), Though not altogether
ignorant of Latin, most
learned sir, I prefer to

speak in my mother tongue

LIT (of yellow), edge, border

LITTOCKS, rags and tatters

LOOM, fellow

LUCINA PER OREM, Lucina,
give thine aid. Lucina
was the goddess who pre-
sided over childbirth

LUDI MAISTER, master of
the school also master of
children's play, hence
holiday-master

LYME-BOUND, sporting dog,
that hunts by scent

MADDOU, MIGHT, in all proba-
bility meadow wort or
meadow-sweet is meant,

- which, if gathered on the right day, St John's Day, will reveal a thief
- MADGE-HOWLET**, the barn-owl
- MAESTRICH**, beleagued and sacked by the Spanish forces under Alexander of Parma in 1579
- MAGISTER ARTIUM**, the degree of M A
- MAGISTERIUM**, the philosopher's stone
- MANDRAGONA**, mandrake, plant believed to possess magic qualities
- MANNA OF ST NICHOLAS (OF BARI)**, the clear, tasteless poison sold by the infamous hag Toffania of Naples in the beginning of the 18th century
- MARCUS TULLIUS**, i e Cicero, the Roman orator
- MARO**, i e Virgil, the Roman poet
- MARTIN SWART** The old song in which the second verse (p 92) occurs is Skelton's *Against a Comely Coystrowne*
- MATAMOROS**, or **MATAMORE**, the conventional boaster of Spanish comedy, the name signifying 'Slayer of Moors'
- 'MATCH FOR MATCH,' QUOTH THE DEVIL TO THE COLLIER**, in the old farce *The Collur of Croydon*
- MAYOR OF HALGAYER**, an imaginary potentate, similar to the Mayor of Garrat, who enforced offences against the unwritten laws of popular opinion—a Cornish proverb
- MI ANIME, CORCULUM MEUM**, my life, my little heart
- MINIKIN, MINION**, a little darling
- MOCKADO**, a mixture of silk and wool, or of either with flax, and resembling velvet
- MONSIEUR**, the Duke of Anjou, youngest son of Henry II of France, a courtier and suitor of Queen Elizabeth
- MOFFET**, pretty young girl
- MONION**, etc (p 8), I die, I have died, to die
- MOUNTAIN ASH**, or **ROWAN-TREE**, was regarded as a safeguard against witchcraft
- MR. BAYES'S TRAGEDY, The Rehearsal** (1671), by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, Bayes being the name of the hero
- MULCIBER**, Vulcan, the smelted Roman God of fire
- MURBLY**, mulberry coloured
- MUSCADINE**, a rich sweet wine
- MUSQUETOOS**, light, short hand gun
- MUSTER**, pattern
- NAAS, THE TYRANT**, or **NAHASH**, king of the Ammonites See I Sam xi
- NAVYTON, SIR ROBERT**, author of *The Court of Queen Elizabeth* (1611) and *Fringemata Regalia* (1612)
- NE QUIBQUAM**, etc (p 217), No one but Ajax can conquer Ajax
- NE SEMISEM QUIDEM**, not a single groat
- NETTLE-STOCKS**, stockings
- NIL ULTRA**, nothing beyond
- NOBLE**, a gold coin = 6s 6d, **HARRY NOBLE**, a noble coined in the reign of Henry VIII, **ROSE NOBLE**, noble bearing representation of a rose, first coined under Edward VI, and worth 10s.
- NONSUCH**, a royal castle, 3 or 4 miles from Epsom in Surrey
- NOONING**, rest and repast at noon
- NOSTRA PAUPERA REGNA**, our poor domains
- NUGE**, trifles
- NUMINUS**, etc (p 100), prayers heard by unfriendly deities
- OBEBRON, VISION OF**, from *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which was not acted until 1600 Shakespeare himself was only a boy at the date of this romance
- O CECOA MENS MORTALIUM**, O darkened mind of man
- OR**, gold
- ORDINARY**, eating house
- ORION**, a gigantic hunter of handsome appearance, see Homer's *Odyssey*, Bks v and xi.
- PALABRAS**, talk, palaver
- PANTOFFLE**, slipper
- PARGEL**, partly
- PAROPA**, a kind of textile material. See Taylor (Water Poet), *Praise of Hempseed*
- PANTLET**, covering for a woman's neck and shoulders, kerchief
- PARYO COCTANTES**, content with little
- PASADY**, walking—term in heridry
- PAST-DIVY**, a fashionable dress, a dress worn at dinner
- PASTIME OF THE PEOPLE**, a rare chronicle (1579) by John Rastell
- PATIENTIA**, patience
- PAUCA VELDA**, (say) few words, have done
- PENDEE**, hidden, in concealment
- PERIALE**, by a vertical line, said of an escutcheon
- PETULA BARRABAS LOQUAX**, heartily sick of a language not her own
- PEWIT**, the lapwing
- PHALTON**, the charioteer of the Sun
- PHILIPPAL CHENEY**, that is, **PHILIP AND CHENEY** (i e China), some kind of worsted or woollen stuff 'Phillip and Cheney' is an early equivalent of 'Dick, Tom, and Harry'
- PHRENESES**, violent madness, frenzy
- PICAROO**, one who lives by his wits, a rogue
- PICCADILLOE**, sort of deep stiff collar
- PIZE**, term of mild execration
- PLACE OF REMOVAL**, cell, or place of confinement
- POKING-AWL**, rod for curling the ruff, sometimes used as a stiletto
- PORTMANTEAU**, portmanteau
- PORT ST MARY'S**, town in the bay of Cadiz, Spain
- POST CHRISTUM NATUM**, after the birth of Christ, A D
- POTOSI**, a town in South America (Bolivia) with rich silver mines, famous since the Spanish conquest
- PRECISIAN**, Puritan
- PRIMO HENRICI SEPTIMI**, in the first year of Henry VII's reign
- PRINCOX**, or **PRINCOCK**, a cockcomb
- PROPECTO**, literally so
- PROJECTION**, the process of transmuting metals, especially the actual fusing of the metals in the crucible
- PROVANT RAPIER**, army sword
- PUCKIST**, a niggardly person
- PUSEY HORN** The manor of Pusey in Berkshire is held

- by virtue of an ox horn, presented to the Pusey family by Canute the Great
- QUASI LUCUS A NON LUCENDO**, for the reverse of the most obvious reason, for an absurd reason
- QUID MIHI CUM CARALLO?** What have I to do with the nag?
- QUINTILIAN**, celebrated Roman grammarian and teacher of rhetoric of the 1st century A.D.
- RABATIN**, broad collar
- RADDLE**, thrush, beat
- RAM'S ALLEY**, off Fleet Street, and near Whitefriars, a resort of thieves and bad characters, and noted for its dirty cook-shops now called Hare Place
- RARE GILLIAN OF CROYDON**, if the old farce, *The Collier of Croydon* is meant, for Gillian read Marian
- BARO ANTECEDENTEM**, an allusion to a passage in Horace's *Odes*, ill. 2, in which punishment is said nearly always to dog the heels of the evil-doer
- RASH**, species of inferior silk
- RATCLIFFE**, or **RADCLIFFE**, EARL OF SUSSEX, was Robert, not Thomas
- RECTE QUIDEM**, etc. (p. 281), Assuredly we are, most worthy air
- REEVE**, steward
- REGALE**, or **REGAL**, a small portable organ
- REQUARDANT**, turned to look back
- RIGARDE**, ADIS, **REBULO**, Richard, you idle scamp, come hither
- ROBERTSON, WILLIAM**, Scottish historian, died in 1793
- ROSE CROSS**, ORDER OF OR ROSICRUCIANS, mystical philosophers, who professed the transmutation of metals alchemy, magic, etc. flourished principally in 17th and 18th centuries
- ROUNDELL**, anything round, an article of feminine attire
- RUFFLER**, bully, swaggerer
- SADLER, SIR RALPH**, whom Elizabeth employed in her dealings with Scotland he was educated under Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex
- ST ANTONLIN'S**, or rather **ST ANTHOLIN'S**, a church (pulled down, 1874) in Watling Street, London, where in 1599 the Puritans began to hold very early morning services
- ST AUSTIN'S EVE**, St. Augustine's (Austin's) Day was 28th August
- ST BARNABY** or **BARNABAS**, the companion of St. Paul
- ST JOHN'S BEND** the Rhine wine known as Johannisberger
- ST JULIAN** patron saint of travellers and hospitality
- ST LUCY'S EVE**, 15th September St. Lucy was the 'daughter to a king of the Scots,' lived in solitude beside the river Meuse in France, and died in 1090
- ST LUKE'S HOSPITAL**, asylum in Moorfields, London
- ST MICHAEL'S MOUNT** rock off the Cornish coast, near Penzance
- ST PETER OF THE FETTERS**, best explained by a reference to Acts xii The chains with which the Apostle was bound were, it is said, carried to Rome by Eudocia, wife of Theodosius the Younger in 439 and from that time regarded with almost idolatrous veneration
- SALTIM BANQUI**, quacks, mountebanks
- SALVE, DOMINE** etc. (p. 99), Hall, sir, dost thou under stand Latin
- SALVING THE WEAPON**, etc. (p. 103) as for instance with Sir Keueha Digby's sympathetic powder
- SANTO DIAVOLO**, St. Satan
- SARACNET**, thin soft woven silk
- SAVIN**, oil of juniper
- SCHOLAR, GREAT OF AMSTERDAM** should be of Rotterdam, where Erasmus was born
- SCONCE**, a fort, detached outwork
- SCOT AND LOT**, rates and taxes
- SCOWYKE**, a mean fellow, wretch
- SEILANT**, sitting, a term in heraldry
- SEVEN SLEEPERS**, martyrs of Ephesus, who, according to the legend slept nearly two hundred years in a cave, from the reign of the Emperor Decius to that of Theodosius II.
- SHAG**, sort of rough cloth
- SHERES**, Jeres, town in Spain, famous for its wine (sherry)
- SHE-WOLF OF FRANCE**, Isabella, daughter of Philip V, king of France
- SHOOTER'S HILL**, near Greenwich, a favourite haunt of highwaymen
- SHOT WINDOW**, window projecting from a wall, used for defence
- SHOVEL-BEARD**, in which the players pushed pieces of money or counters on to certain lines and squares on a board
- SHREWSBURY**, COUNTESS OF Queen Mary was at this time in the custody of the Earl of Shrewsbury
- SIDNEY, PHILIP**, the gallant poet and soldier who fell before Zutphen in Holland in 1588
- SIEVE AND SHEARS**, divination by means of a sieve and a pair of shears
- ST FIXUM SOLVAT**, etc. (p. 118), If you dissolve a fixed substance and make the solution fly, and then fix it again, being volatile, you will live safe and sound if the process causes a wind, it is worth a hundred pieces of gold The wind blows whereto list. Catch who catch can
- SINE PROLE**, childless
- SIR PANDARUS OF TROY**, chief of the Lycians in the Trojan War, but degraded in the romances of chivalry to a pimp or procurer
- SIR TALBOT** a dog's name
- SKELTON'S BOOKS**, or fuller, *Certaine Booke compiled by Master Skelton, Poet Laureat*, of various contents
- SKENE**, short sword, knife
- SKINKER**, a tapster
- SLEUTH HOUND**, blood hound
- SOCKET**, to convey things privately out of the house
- SLOR** sort of trousers a long loose outer sack like garment
- SNOOK FACED**, of girlish face or complexion
- SNAILS** an oath corrupted from Christ's (God's) nails, with which His hands and feet were pierced

SNICK UP, GO, GO and be hanged! 'Snick up,' or 'sneck up,' is possibly a corruption of 'his neck up'

SPITAL, hospital

SPITCHCOCKED, split and broiled

STAND AND DELIVER, the formula of highwaymen

STARTUP, high-topped shoe, buskin

STIRABOUT, oatmeal and dripping stirred together in a frying pan whilst cooking

STOUP, a drinking-vessel, liquid measure

STRAPPADO, a military punishment, the offender was drawn to a considerable height and suddenly let fall

SUFFLAMINA, be silent

SWAIF, faint, swoon

SWASHING, bullying, bragging

TAFFETA, silk stuff

TARLETON, THE PLAYER, was Richard Tarlton (died 1588), a comic actor and jester, patronised by Leicester

TAU, LETTER, from the Greek alphabet, corresponds to 't'

TENT STITCH, single stitch in worsted work and embroidery

TERTIO MARIE, the third year of Mary's reign, 1556

THREE CRANES IN THE VINTRY, a celebrated tavern in Upper Thames Street, between London Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge

TRISMEGISTUS, the name given in the early Christian ages to the Egyptian god Thoth, whom the Ancient Greeks identified with their god Hermes Trismegistus was regarded by the alchemists as a father of their art

TROWL, to pass round

TRUEPENNY, the name Hamlet applies to his Father's Ghost in Act I. sc 5

TUGURIA, huts, cottages

TURNBALL, or TURNBULL, STREET, now Turnmill Street, near Clerkenwell, formerly a resort of bullies and low characters

TWIN STREAMS (p 189), the Rhone and the Saône See Caesar, *De Bell Gall* Bk I.

TYBURN TIPPET, halter

TYKE, a dog

UNO AVULSO, etc (p 103), when one has been torn off, another grows in its place

UNTIMEOUSLY, untimely

UP SEYES, a corrupted Dutch or German phrase, meaning toss it off! here it goes!

VAILS, a windfall, tip, gratuity given to servants

VANBRUGH, SIR JOHN, dramatist and architect of Queen Anne's reign

VARIUM ET MUTABILE, changeable and capricious

VENLO, was besieged, but unsuccessfully, by the Spaniards in November 1578

VIA! away!

VIRGINAL, small harpsichord or old-fashioned piano without legs

VOGUE LA GALÈRE, come what may

VOTO A DIOS, Spanish oath of menace, By God!

WASSAIL, spiced ale or wine

WATCHET, pale blue
'WHAT MAN THAT SEES,' etc (p 154), from Spenser's Cantos on Mutability, a fragment of the *Faerie Queene*

WHITEBOY, pet, darling, a term of endearment

WHITE WITCH, wizard or witch of beneficent disposition

WHITTLE, a large knife, generally one carried in the girdle

WIFE OF BATH, one of Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims

WILLOUGHBY, LORD, Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby de Eresby, a distinguished soldier, hero of the ballad of 'The Brave Lord Willoughby'

WITCH'S ELM, or rather rowan-tree, as in the passage a few paragraphs lower down (p 106)

WITCH'S MARK, a wart or mark, insensible to pain, made by the devil on his vassals

WON'D, dwelt

WUS, know

WYVERN, a winged dragon, a heraldic term

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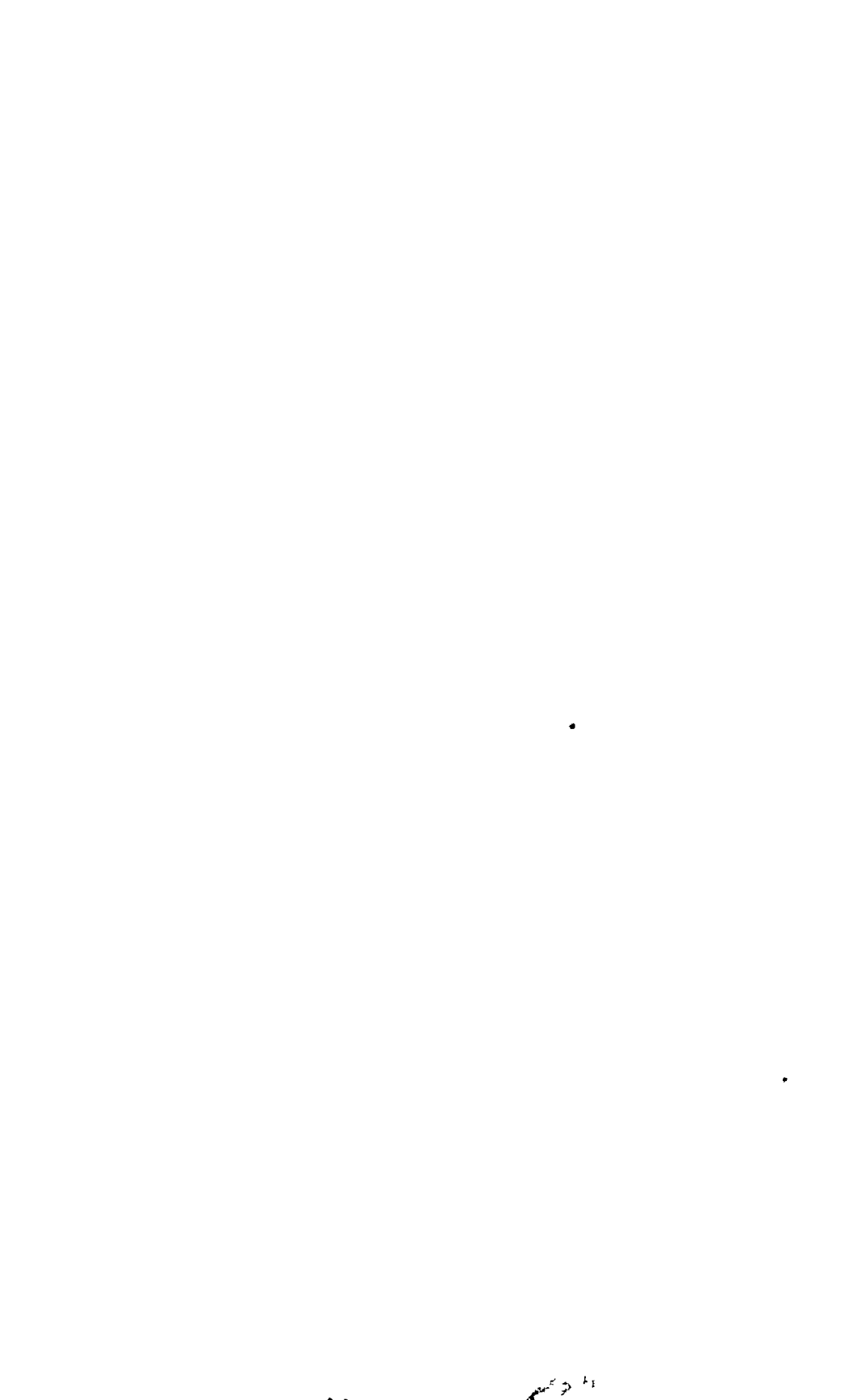
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THE
WAVERLEY NOVELS
OF
SIR WALTER SCOTT
VOLUME XXII



THE FAIR MAID OF PERTH

with good Mrs Policy, the housekeeper in that most interesting part of the old building called Queen Mary's Apartments. But a circumstance which lately happened has conferred upon me greater privileges, so that, indeed, I might, I believe, venture on the exploit of Chatelet, who was executed for being found secreted at midnight in the very bedchamber of Scotland's mistress.

It chanced that the good lady I have mentioned was, in the discharge of her function, showing the apartments to a cockney from London — not one of your quiet, dull, commonplace visitors, who gape, yawn, and listen with an acquiescent 'umh' to the information doled out by the provincial cicerone. No such thing — this was the brisk, alert agent of a great house in the city, who missed no opportunity of doing business, as he termed it — that is, of putting off the goods of his employers, and improving his own account of commission. He had fidgeted through the suite of apartments, without finding the least opportunity to touch upon that which he considered as the principal end of his existence. Even the story of Rizzio's assassination presented no ideas to this emissary of commerce, until the housekeeper appealed, in support of her narrative, to the dusky stains of blood upon the floor.

'These are the stains,' she said, 'nothing will remove them from the place — there they have been for two hundred and fifty years, and there they will remain while the floor is left standing — neither water nor anything else will ever remove them from that spot.'

Now our cockney, amongst other articles, sold Scouring Drops, as they are called, and a stain of two hundred and fifty years' standing was interesting to him, not because it had been caused by the blood of a queen's favourite, slain in her apartment, but because it offered so admirable an opportunity to prove the efficacy of his unequalled Detergent Elixir. Down on his knees went our friend, but neither in horror nor devotion.

'Two hundred and fifty years, ma'am, and nothing take it away? Why, if it had been five hundred, I have something in my pocket will fetch it out in five minutes. D'ye see this elixir, ma'am? I will show you the stain vanish in a moment.'

Accordingly, wetting one end of his handkerchief with the all-deterging specific, he began to rub away on the planks, without heeding the remonstrances of Mrs Policy. She, good soul, stood at first in astonishment, like the abbess of St.

Bridget's, when a profane visitant drank up the vial of brandy which had long passed muster among the relics of the cloister for the tears of the blessed saint. The venerable guardian of St. Bridget probably expected the interference of her patroness, she of Holyrood might, perhaps, hope that David Rizzio's spectre would arise to prevent the profanation. But Mrs. Policy stood not long in the silence of horror. She uplifted her voice, and screamed as loudly as Queen Mary herself when the dreadful deed was in the act of perpetration —

'Harrow, now out, and walawa!' she cried.

I happened to be taking my morning walk in the adjoining gallery, pondering in my mind why the kings of Scotland, who hung around me, should be each and every one painted with a nose like the knocker of a door, when lo! the walls once more re-echoed with such shrieks as formerly were as often heard in the Scottish palaces as were sounds of revelry and music. Somewhat surprised at such an alarm in a place so solitary, I hastened to the spot, and found the well-meaning traveller scrubbing the floor like a housemaid, while Mrs. Policy, dragging him by the skirts of the coat, in vain endeavoured to divert him from his sacrilegious purpose. It cost me some trouble to explain to the zealous purifier of silk-stockings, embroidered waistcoats, broadcloth, and deal planks that there were such things in the world as stains which ought to remain indelible, on account of the associations with which they are connected. Our good friend viewed everything of the kind only as the means of displaying the virtue of his vaunted commodity. He comprehended, however, that he would not be permitted to proceed to exemplify its powers on the present occasion, as two or three inhabitants appeared, who, like me, threatened to maintain the housekeeper's side of the question. He therefore took his leave, muttering that he had always heard the Scots were a nasty people, but had no idea they carried it so far as to choose to have the floors of their palaces blood-boltered, like Banquo's ghost, when to remove them would have cost but a hundred drops of the Infallible Detergent Elixir, prepared and sold by Messrs. Scrub and Rub, in five shilling and ten shilling bottles, each bottle being marked with the initials of the inventor, to counterfeit which would be to incur the pains of forgery.

Freed from the odious presence of this lover of cleanliness, my good friend Mrs. Policy was profuse in her expressions of

INTRODUCTORY

thanks, and yet her gratitude, instead of exhausting itself in these declarations, according to the way of the world, continues as lively at this moment as if she had never thanked me at all. It is owing to her recollection of this piece of good service that I have the permission of wandering, like the ghost of some departed gentleman-usher, through these deserted halls, sometimes, as the old Irish ditty expresses it,

Thinking upon things that are long enough ago,

and sometimes wishing I could, with the good-luck of most editors of romantic narrative, light upon some hidden crypt or massive antique cabinet, which should yield to my researches an almost illegible manuscript, containing the authentic particulars of some of the strange deeds of those wild days of the unhappy Mary

My dear Mrs Baliol used to sympathise with me when I regretted that all godsendings of this nature had ceased to occur, and that an author might chatter his teeth to pieces by the seaside without a wave ever wafting to him a casket containing such a history as that of *Automathes*, that he might break his shins in stumbling through a hundred vaults without finding anything but rats and mice, and become the tenant of a dozen sets of shabby tenements without finding that they contained any manuscript but the weekly bill for board and lodging. A dairymaid of these degenerate days might as well wash and deck her dairy in hopes of finding the fairy tester in her shoe.

‘It is a sad and too true a tale, cousin,’ said Mrs Baliol. ‘I am sure we all have occasion to regret the want of these ready supplements to a failing invention. But you, most of all, have right to complain that the fairies have not favoured your researches — you, who have shown the world that the age of chivalry still exists — you, the knight of Croftangry, who braved the fury of the “London ’prentice bold,” in behalf of the fair Dame Policy, and the memorial of Rizzio’s slaughter!’ Is it not a pity, cousin, considering the feat of chivalry was otherwise so much according to rule — is it not, I say, a great pity that the lady had not been a little younger, and the legend a little older?’

‘Why, as to the age at which a fair dame loses the benefit of chivalry, and is no longer entitled to crave boon of brave knight, that I leave to the statutes of the Order of Errantry, but for the blood of Rizzio I take up the gauntlet, and maintain

against all and sundry that I hold the stains to be of no modern date, but to have been actually the consequence and the record of that terrible assassination'

'As I cannot accept the challenge to the field, fair cousin, I am contented to require proof'

'The unaltered tradition of the Palace, and the correspondence of the existing state of things with that tradition.'

'Explain, if you please.'

'I will' The universal tradition bears that, when Rizzio was dragged out of the chamber of the Queen, the heat and fury of the assassins, who struggled which should deal him most wounds, despatched him at the door of the ante-room. At the door of the apartment, therefore, the greater quantity of the ill-fated minion's blood was spilled, and there the marks of it are still shown. It is reported further by historians, that Mary continued her entreaties for his life, mingling her prayers with screams and exclamations, until she knew that he was assuredly slain, on which she wiped her eyes and said, "I will now study revenge"'

'All this is granted. But the blood — would it not wash out, or waste out, think you, in so many years?'

'I am coming to that presently' The constant tradition of the Palace says, that Mary discharged any measures to be taken to remove the marks of slaughter, which she had resolved should remain as a memorial to quicken and confirm her purposed vengeance. But it is added that, satisfied with the knowledge that it existed, and not desirous to have the ghastly evidence always under her eye, she caused a traverse, as it is called (that is, a temporary screen of boards), to be drawn along the under part of the ante-room, a few feet from the door, so as to separate the place stained with the blood from the rest of the apartment, and involve it in considerable obscurity. Now this temporary partition still exists, and, by running across and interrupting the plan of the roof and cornices, plainly intimates that it has been intended to serve some temporary purpose, since it disfigures the proportions of the room, interferes with the ornaments of the ceiling, and could only have been put there for some such purpose as hiding an object too disagreeable to be looked upon. As to the objection that the blood-stains would have disappeared in course of time, I apprehend that, if measures to efface them were not taken immediately after the affair happened — if the blood, in other words, were allowed to sink into the wood, the stain would become almost

indelible. Now, not to mention that our Scottish palaces were not particularly well washed in those days, and that there were no Patent Drops to assist the labours of the mop, I think it very probable that these dark relics might subsist for a long course of time, even if Mary had not desired or directed that they should be preserved, but screened by the traverse from public sight. I know several instances of similar blood-stains remaining for a great many years, and I doubt whether, after a certain time, anything can remove them save the carpenter's plane. If any seneschal, by way of increasing the interest of the apartments, had, by means of paint, or any other mode of imitation, endeavoured to palm upon posterity supposititious stigmata, I conceive that the impostor would have chosen the Queen's cabinet and the bedroom for the scene of his trick, placing his bloody tracery where it could be distinctly seen by visitors, instead of hiding it behind the traverse in this manner. The existence of the said traverse, or temporary partition, is also extremely difficult to be accounted for, if the common and ordinary tradition be rejected. In short, all the rest of this striking locality is so true to the historical fact, that I think it may well bear out the additional circumstance of the blood on the floor.

'I profess to you,' answered Mrs Bahol, 'that I am very willing to be converted to your faith. We talk of a credulous vulgar, without always recollecting that there is a vulgar incredulity, which, in historical matters, as well as in those of religion, finds it easier to doubt than to examine, and endeavours to assume the credit of an *esprit fort*, by denying whatever happens to be a little beyond the very limited comprehension of the sceptic. And so, that point being settled, and you possessing, as we understand, the open sesame into these secret apartments, how, if we may ask, do you intend to avail yourself of your privilege? Do you propose to pass the night in the royal bedchamber?'

'For what purpose, my dear lady? If to improve the rheumatism, this east wind may serve the purpose.'

'Improve the rheumatism! Heaven forbid! that would be worse than adding colours to the violet. No, I mean to recommend a night on the couch of the Rose of Scotland, merely to improve the imagination. Who knows what dreams might be produced by a night spent in a mansion of so many memories! For aught I know, the iron door of the postern stair might open at the dead hour of midnight, and, as at the time of the

conspiracy, forth might sally the phantom assassins, with stealthy step and ghastly look, to renew the semblance of the deed. There comes the fierce fanatic Ruthven, party hatred enabling him to bear the armour which would otherwise weigh down a form extenuated by wasting disease. See how his writhen features show under the hollow helmet, like those of a corpse tenanted by a demon, whose vindictive purpose looks out at the flashing eyes, while the visage has the stillness of death. Yonder appears the tall form of the boy Darnley, as goodly in person as vacillating in resolution, yonder he advances with hesitating step, and yet more hesitating purpose, his childish fear having already overcome his childish passion. He is in the plight of a mischievous lad who has fired a mine, and who now, expecting the explosion in remorse and terror, would give his life to quench the train which his own hand lighted. Yonder — yonder — But I forget the rest of the worthy cut-throats. Help me if you can.'

'Summon up,' said I, 'the postulate, George Douglas, the most active of the gang. Let him arise at your call — the claimant of wealth which he does not possess, the partaker of the illustrious blood of Douglas, but which in his veins is sullied with illegitimacy. Paint him the ruthless, the daring, the ambitious — so nigh greatness, yet debarred from it, so near to wealth, yet excluded from possessing it, a political Tantalus, ready to do or dare anything to terminate his necessities and assert his imperfect claims.'

'Admirable, my dear Croftangry! But what is a postulate?'

'Pooh, my dear madam, you disturb the current of my ideas. The postulate was, in Scottish phrase, the candidate for some benefice which he had not yet attained. George Douglas, who stabbed Rizzio, was the postulate for the temporal possessions of the rich abbey of Arbroath.'

'I stand informed. Come, proceed, who comes next?'

continued Mrs. Bahol.

'Who comes next? Yon tall, thin-made, savage looking man, with the petronel in his hand, must be Andrew Ker of Faldonside,¹ a brother's son, I believe, of the celebrated Sir David Ker of Cessford, his look and bearing those of a Border freebooter, his disposition so savage that, during the fray in the cabinet, he presented his loaded piece at the bosom of the

¹ For this stout and zealous promoter of the Reformation see David Laing's Preface p lxxviii to *Knox's Works* vol vi 1864. He married in 1574 Margaret Stewart, widow of John Knox, the Reformer (*Laing*)

young and beautiful Queen, that queen also being within a few weeks of becoming a mother'

'Brave, *beau cousin*! Well, having raised your bevy of phantoms, I hope you do not intend to send them back to their cold beds to warm them? You will put them to some action, and since you do threaten the Canongate with your desperate quill, you surely mean to novelise, or to dramatise, if you will, this most singular of all tragedies?'

'Worse — that is less interesting — periods of history have been, indeed, shown up, for furnishing amusement to the peaceable ages which have succeeded; but, dear lady, the events are too well known in Mary's days to be used as vehicles of romantic fiction. What can a better writer than myself add to the elegant and forcible narrative of Robertson? So adieu to my vision. I awake, like John Bunyan, "and behold it is a dream." Well, enough that I awake without a sciatica, which would have probably rewarded my slumbers had I profaned Queen Mary's bed by using it as a mechanical resource to awaken a torpid imagination'

'This will never do, cousin,' answered Mrs Baliol; 'you must get over all these scruples, if you would thrive in the character of a romantic historian, which you have determined to embrace. What is the classic Robertson to you? The light which he carried was that of a lamp to illuminate the dark events of antiquity, yours is a magic lantern to raise up wonders which never existed. No reader of sense wonders at your historical inaccuracies, any more than he does to see Punch in the show-box seated on the same throne with King Solomon in his glory, or to hear him hallooing out to the patriarch, amid the deluge, "Mighty hazy weather, Master Noah"'

'Do not mistake me, my dear madam,' said I, 'I am quite conscious of my own immunities as a tale-teller. But even the mendacious Mr Fag, in Sheridan's *Rivals*,¹ assures us that, though he never scruples to tell a lie at his master's command, yet it hurts his conscience to be found out. Now, this is the reason why I avoid in prudence all well-known paths of history, where every one can read the finger-posts carefully set up to advise them of the right turning, and the very boys and girls, who learn the history of Britain by way of question and answer, hoot at a poor author if he abandons the highway'

'Do not be discouraged, however, cousin Chrystal. There

¹ [Act ii. sc 1]

are plenty of wildernesses in Scottish history, through which, unless I am greatly misinformed, no certain paths have been laid down from actual survey, but which are only described by imperfect tradition, which fills up with wonders and with legends the periods in which no real events are recognised to have taken place. Even thus, as Mat Prior says—

Geographers on pathless downs
Place elephants instead of towns.'

'If such be your advice, my dear lady,' said I, 'the course of my story shall take its rise upon this occasion at a remote period of history, and in a province removed from my natural sphere of the Canongate.'

It was under the influence of those feelings that I undertook the following historical romance, which, often suspended and flung aside, is now arrived at a size too important to be altogether thrown away, although there may be little prudence in sending it to the press.

I have not placed in the mouth of the characters the Lowland Scotch dialect now spoken, because unquestionably the Scottish of that day resembled very closely the Anglo Saxon, with a sprinkling of French or Norman to enrich it. Those who wish to investigate the subject may consult the *Chronicles* of Winton, and the *History of Bruce* by Archdeacon Barbour. But supposing my own skill in the ancient Scottish were sufficient to invest the dialogue with its peculiarities, a translation must have been necessary for the benefit of the general reader. The Scottish dialect may be therefore considered as laid aside, unless where the use of peculiar words may add emphasis or vivacity to the composition.

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THE FAIR MAID OF PERTH

OR

ST VALENTINE'S DAY

PREFACE

IN continuing the lucubrations of Chrystal Croftangry, it occurred that, although the press had of late years teemed with works of various descriptions concerning the Scottish Gael, no attempt had hitherto been made to sketch their manners, as these might be supposed to have existed at the period when the statute book, as well as the page of the chronicler, begins to present constant evidence of the difficulties to which the crown was exposed, while the haughty house of Douglas all but overbalanced its authority on the Southern border, and the North was at the same time torn in pieces by the yet untamed savageness of the Highland races, and the daring loftiness to which some of the remoter chieftains still carried their pretensions. The well authenticated fact of two powerful clans having deputed each thirty champions to fight out a quarrel of old standing, in presence of King Robert III, his brother the Duke of Albany, and the whole court of Scotland, at Perth, in the year of grace 1396, seemed to mark with equal distinctness the rancour of these mountain-feuds and the degraded condition of the general government of the country, and it was fixed upon accordingly as the point on which the main incidents of a romantic narrative might be made to hinge. The characters of Robert III, his ambitious brother, and his dissolute son seemed to offer some opportunities of interesting contrast, and the tragic fate of the heir of the throne, with its immediate consequences, might serve to complete the picture of cruelty and lawlessness.

Two features of the story of this barrier battle on the Inch of Perth — the flight of one of the appointed champions, and the reckless heroism of a townsman, that voluntarily offered for a small piece of coin to supply his place in the mortal encounter — suggested the imaginary persons, on whom much of the novel

is expended. The fugitive Celt might have been easily dealt with, had a ludicrous style of colouring been adopted, but it appeared to the Author that there would be more of novelty, as well as of serious interest, if he could succeed in gaining for him something of that sympathy which is incompatible with the total absence of respect. Miss Baillie had drawn a coward by nature capable of acting as a hero under the strong impulse of filial affection. It seemed not impossible to conceive the case of one constitutionally weak of nerve being supported by feelings of honour and of jealousy up to a certain point, and then suddenly giving way, under circumstances to which the bravest heart could hardly refuse compassion.¹

The controversy, as to who really were the clans that figured in the barbarous conflict of the Inch, has been revived since the publication of the *Fan Maid of Perth*, and treated in particular at great length by Mr Robert Mackay of Thurso, in his very curious *History of the House and Clan of Mackay*.² Without pretending to say that he has settled any part of the question in the affirmative, this gentleman certainly seems to have quite succeeded in proving that his own worthy sept had no part in the transaction. The Mackays were in that age seated, as they have since continued to be, in the extreme north of the island, and their chief at the time was a personage of such importance, that his name and proper designation could not have been omitted in the early narratives of the occurrence. He on one occasion brought four thousand of his clan to the aid of the royal banner against the Lord of the Isles. This historian is of opinion that the Clan Quhele of Wyntoun were the Camerons, who appear to have about that period been often designated as Macewans, and to have gained much more recently the name of Cameron, & e Wrynose, from a blemish in the physiognomy of some heroic chief of the line of Lochiel. This view of the case is also adopted by Douglas in his *Baronage*, where he frequently mentions the bitter feuds between Clan Chattan and Clan Kay, and identifies the latter sept, in reference to the events of 1396, with the Camerons. It is perhaps impossible to clear up thoroughly this controversy, little interesting in itself, at least to readers on this side of Inverness. The names, as we have them in Wyntoun, are 'Clanwhewyl' and 'Clachinya,' the latter probably not correctly transcribed. In the *Scoti-Chronicon* they are 'Clanquhele' and 'Clankay.' Hector Boece writes 'Clanchattan' and 'Clankay,' in which he

¹ [See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol ix pp 222-225]

² Edinburgh, 4to, 1829

is followed by Leshe, while Buchanan disdains to disfigure his page with their Gaelic designations at all, and merely describes them as two powerful races in the wild and lawless region beyond the Grampians. Out of this jumble what Sassenach can pretend *dare lucem*? The name Clanweill appears so late as 1594, in an Act of James VI. Is it not possible that it may be, after all, a mere corruption of Clan Lochiel?

The reader may not be displeased to have Wyntoun's original rhymes [bk. ix chap. xvii.] —

A thousand and thre hundyr yere,
Nynty and sex to mak all clere —
Of thre-scor wyld Scottis men,
Thretty agane thretty then,
In felny bolnit of auld fel,¹
As thare forelderis ware slane to dede
Tha thre score ware clannys twa,
Clahynne Qwhewyl and Clachynyha,
Of thir twa kynnis ware tha men,
Thretty agane thretty then,
And thare thai had than chiftanys twa,
Scha² Ferquharis' son wes ane of tha,
The tother Cristy Johnesone
A selcouth thing be tha was done
At Sanct Johnestone besid the Freris,
All thai entrit in barreris
Wyth bow and ax, knyf and sward,
To deil amang thaim thare last werd
Thare thau laid on that time sa fast,
Quha had the ware thare at the last
I will noucht say, bot quha best had,
He wes but dout bathe muth and mad.
Fifty or má ware slane that day,
Suá few wyth lif than past away

The prior of Lochleven makes no mention either of the evasion of one of the Gaelic champions, or of the gallantry of the Perth artisan, in offering to take a share in the conflict. Both incidents, however, were introduced, no doubt from tradition, by the Continuator of Fordun [Bower], whose narrative is in these words —

Anno Dom. millesimo trecentesimo nonagesimo sexto, magna pars borealis Scotiæ, trans Alpes, inquietata fuit per duos pestiferos Cateranos, et eorum sequaces, viz. Scheabeg et suos consanguinarios, qui Clankay, et Cristi Jonsonem ac suos, qui Clankwehle dicebantur, qui nullo pacto vel

¹ & c. Boiled with the cruelty of an old feud

² *Scha* is supposed to be *Toshach* & c. Macintosh the father of the chief of this sept at the time was named Ferchard. In Bower [the Continuator of Fordun] he is Scheabeg & c. Toshach the Little.

tractatu pacificari poterant, nullâque arte regis vel gubernatoris poterant edomari, quoadusque nobilis et industrius Dominus David de Lindesay de Crawford, et Dominus Thomas comes Moraviæ, diligentiam et vires apposuerunt, ac inter partes sic tractaverunt, ut coram domino rege certo die convenient apud Perth, et alterutra pars eligeret de progenie sua triginta personas adversus triginta de parte contraria, cum gladiis tantum, et arcibus et sagittis, absque deploidibus, vel armaturis aliis, præter bipennes, et sic congregientes finem liti ponerent, et terra pace potiretur. Utrique igitur parti summè placuit contractus, et die lunæ proximo ante festum Sancti Michaelis, apud North insulam de Perth, coram rege et gubernatore et innumerabili multitudine comparentes, conflictum acerrimum inierunt, ubi de sexaginta interfecti sunt omnes, excepto uno ex parte Clankay et undecim exceptis ex parte altera. Hoc etiam ibi accidit, quod omnes in procinctu belli constituti, unus eorum locum diffugii considerans, inter omnes in amnem elabitur, et aquam de Thaya natando transgreditur, à millenis insequitur, sed nusquam apprehenditur. Stant igitur partes attonitæ, tanquam non ad conflictum progressuri, ob defectum evasi noluit enim pars integrum habens numerum sociorum consentire, ut unus de suis demeretur, nec potuit pars altera quocumque pretio alterum ad supplendum vicem fugientis inducere. Stupent igitur omnes hærentes, de damno fugitivi conquerentes. Et cum totum illud opus cessare putaretur, ecce in medio prorupit unus stipulosus vernaculus, staturâ modicus, sed efferus, dicens, Ecce ego! quis me conducet intrare cum operarius istis ad hunc ludum theatralem? Pro dimidia enim marca ludum experiar, ultra hoc petens, ut si vivus de palæstra evasero, victum à quocumque vestium recipiam dum vixero quia, sicut dicitur, 'Majorem caritatem nemo habet, quàm ut animam suam ponat suis pro amicis' Quali mercede donabor, qui animam meam pro inimicis reipublicæ et regni pono? Quod petiit, a rege et diversis magnatibus conceditur. Cum hoc arcus ejus extenditur, et primò sagittam in partem contrariam transmittit, et unum interficit. Confestim hunc inde sagittæ volitant, bipennes librant, gladios vibrant, alterutro certant, et veluti carnifices boves in macello, sic inconsternatè ad invicem se trucidant. Sed nec inter tantos repertus est vel unus, qui, tanquam vecors aut timidus, sive post tergum alterius declinans, seipsum a tanta cæde prætendit excusare. Iste tamen tyro superveniens finaliter illæsus exivit, et dehinc multo tempore Boreas quievit, nec ibidem fuit, ut suprâ, cateranorum excursus¹

The scene is heightened with many florid additions by Boece and Leslie, and the contending savages in Buchanan utter speeches after the most approved pattern of Livy.

The devotion of the young chief of Clan Quhele's foster-father and foster-brethren in the novel is a trait of clannish fidelity, of which Highland story furnishes many examples. In the battle of Inverkeithing between the Royalists and Oliver Cromwell's troops, a foster-father and seven brave sons are known to have thus sacrificed themselves for Sir Hector Maclean of Duart, the old man, whenever one of his boys fell, thrusting forward another to fill his place at the right hand of

¹ See Translation of Continuator of Fordun Note 3

the beloved chief, with the very words adopted in the novel — ‘Another for Hector!’

Nay, the feeling could outlive generations. The late much-lamented General Stewart of Garth, in his account of the battle of Killiecrankie, informs us that Lochiel was attended on the field by the son of his foster-brother

‘This faithful adherent followed him like his shadow, ready to assist him with his sword, or cover him from the shot of the enemy. Suddenly the chief missed his friend from his side, and, turning round to look what had become of him, saw him lying on his back with his breast pierced by an arrow. He had hardly breath, before he expired, to tell Lochiel that, seeing an enemy, a Highlander in General Mackay’s army, aiming at him with a bow and arrow, he sprung behind him, and thus sheltered him from instant death. This,’ observes the gallant David Stewart, ‘is a species of duty not often practised, perhaps, by our aide de-camps of the present day — *Sketches of the Highlanders*, vol. 1. p. 65

I have only to add, that the Second Series of *Chronicles of the Canongate*, with the chapter introductory which precedes, appeared in May 1828, and had a favourable reception.¹

ABBOTSFORD, Aug 15, 1831

¹ See Mr Senior’s *Criticism*. Note 4



THE
FAIR MAID OF PERTH
OR ST VALENTINE'S DAY

CHAPTER I

'Behold the Tiber,' the vain Roman cried,
Viewing the ample Tay from Baiglie's side,
But where's the Scot that would the vaunt repay,
And hail the puny Tiber for the Tay ?¹

Anonymous

AMONG all the provinces in Scotland, if an intelligent stranger were asked to describe the most varied and the most beautiful, it is probable he would name the county of Perth. A native also of any other district of Caledonia, though his partialities might lead him to prefer his native county in the first instance, would certainly class that of Perth in the second, and thus give its inhabitants a fair right to plead that, prejudice apart, Perthshire forms the fairest portion of the Northern kingdom. It is long since Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, with that excellent taste which characterises her writings, expressed her opinion that the most interesting district of every country, and that which exhibits the varied beauties of natural scenery in greatest perfection, is that where the mountains sink down upon the champaign, or more level land. The most picturesque, if not the highest, hills are also to be found in the county of Perth. The rivers find their way out of the mountainous region by the wildest leaps, and through the most romantic passes connecting the Highlands with the Lowlands. Above, the vegetation of a happier climate and soil is mingled

¹ See Tiber and Tay Note 5

with the magnificent characteristics of mountain scenery, and woods, groves, and thickets in profusion clothe the base of the hills, ascend up the ravines, and mingle with the precipices. It is in such favoured regions that the traveller finds what the poet Gray, or some one else, has termed beauty lying in the lap of terror.

From the same advantage of situation, this favoured province presents a variety of the most pleasing character. Its lakes, woods, and mountains may vie in beauty with any that the Highland tour exhibits, while Perthshire contains, amidst this romantic scenery, and in some places in connexion with it, many fertile and habitable tracts, which may vie with the richness of merry England herself. The county has also been the scene of many remarkable exploits and events, some of historical importance, others interesting to the poet and romancer, though recorded in popular tradition alone. It was in these vales that the Saxons of the plain and the Gael of the mountains had many a desperate and bloody encounter, in which it was frequently impossible to decide the palm of victory between the mailed chivalry of the low country and the plaided clans whom they opposed.

Perth, so eminent for the beauty of its situation, is a place of great antiquity, and old tradition assigns to the town the importance of a Roman foundation. That victorious nation, it is said, pretended to recognise the Tiber in the much more magnificent and navigable Tay, and to acknowledge the large level space, well known by the name of the North Inch, as having a near resemblance to their Campus Martius. The city was often the residence of our monarchs, who, although they had no palace at Perth, found the Cistercian convent amply sufficient for the reception of their court. It was here that James the First, one of the wisest and best of the Scottish kings, fell a victim to the jealousy of the vengeful aristocracy. Here also occurred the mysterious conspiracy of Gowrie, the scene of which has only of late been effaced, by the destruction of the ancient palace in which the tragedy was acted. The Antiquarian Society of Perth, with just zeal for the objects of their pursuit, have published¹ an accurate plan of this memorable mansion, with some remarks upon its connexion with the narrative of the plot, which display equal acuteness and candour.

One of the most beautiful points of view which Britain, or

¹ The first volume, printed at Perth, 1827, is all that ever appeared (*Lainy*)

that, whilst deliberating on what might be brought forward for the amusement of the public, I should pitch upon some narrative connected with the splendid scenery which made so much impression on my youthful imagination, and which may perhaps have that effect in setting off the imperfections of the composition which ladies suppose a fine set of china to possess in heightening the flavour of indifferent tea ¹

The period at which I propose to commence is, however, considerably earlier than either of the remarkable historical transactions to which I have already alluded, as the events which I am about to recount occurred during the last years of the 14th century, when the Scottish sceptre was swayed by the gentle but feeble hand of John, who, on being called to the throne, assumed the title of Robert the Third.

¹ See Author's Description of Perth Note 7.

had drawn on her much notice from the young gallants of the royal court, when it chanced to be residing in or near Perth, insomuch that more than one nobleman of the highest rank, and most distinguished for deeds of chivalry, were more attentive to exhibit feats of horsemanship as they passed the door of old Simon Glover, in what was called Couvrefew, or Curfew, Street, than to distinguish themselves in the tournaments, where the noblest dames of Scotland were spectators of their address.

But the glover's daughter — for, as was common with the citizens and artisans of that early period, her father, Simon, derived his surname from the trade which he practised — showed no inclination to listen to any gallantry which came from those of a station highly exalted above that which she herself occupied, and, though probably in no degree insensible to her personal charms, seemed desirous to confine her conquests to those who were within her own sphere of life. Indeed, her beauty being of that kind which we connect more with the mind than with the person, was, notwithstanding her natural kindness and gentleness of disposition, rather allied to reserve than to gaiety, even when in company with her equals, and the earnestness with which she attended upon the exercises of devotion induced many to think, that Catharine Glover nourished the private wish to retire from the world and bury herself in the recesses of the cloister. But to such a sacrifice, should it be meditated, it was not to be expected her father, reputed a wealthy man, and having this only child, would yield a willing consent.

In her resolution of avoiding the addresses of the gallant courtiers, the reigning beauty of Perth was confirmed by the sentiments of her parent. 'Let them go,' he said — 'let them go, Catharine, those gallants, with their capering horses, their jingling spurs, their plumed bonnets, and their trim mustachios. They are not of our class, nor will we aim at pairing with them. To-morrow is St Valentine's Day, when every bird chooses her mate, but you will not see the linnet pair with the sparrowhawk, nor the Robin Redbreast with the kite. My father was an honest burgher of Perth, and could use his needle as well as I can. Did there come war to the gates of our fair burgh, down went needles, thread, and shamoy leather, and out came the good head-piece and target from the dark nook, and the long lance from above the chimney. Show me a day that either he or I was absent when the provost made his musters! Thus we have led our lives, my girl, working to win our bread, and fighting to defend it. I will have no son-in-law that thinks

himself better than me, and for these lords and knights, I trust thou wilt always remember thou art too low to be their lawful love, and too high to be their unlawful loon. And now lay by thy work, lass, for it is holytide eve, and it becomes us to go to the evening service, and pray that Heaven may send thee a good Valentine to-morrow.'

So the Fair Maid of Perth laid aside the splendid hawking-glove which she was embroidering for the Lady Drummond, and putting on her holyday kirtle, prepared to attend her father to the Blackfriars monastery, which was adjacent to Convrefew Street in which they lived. On their passage, Simon Glover, an ancient and esteemed burgess of Perth, somewhat stricken in years, and increased in substance, received from young and old the homage due to his velvet jerkin and his gold chain, while the well-known beauty of Catharine, though concealed beneath her screen—which resembled the mantilla still worn in Flanders—called both obeisances and doffings of the bonnet from young and old.

As the pair moved on arm in arm, they were followed by a tall handsome young man, dressed in a yeoman's habit of the plainest kind, but which showed to advantage his fine limbs, as the handsome countenance that looked out from a quantity of curled tresses, surmounted by a small scarlet bonnet, became that species of head-dress. He had no other weapon than a staff in his hand, it not being thought fit that persons of his degree (for he was an apprentice to the old glover) should appear on the street armed with sword or dagger, a privilege which the jackmen, or military retainers of the nobility, esteemed exclusively their own. He attended his master at holytide, partly in the character of a domestic, or guardian, should there be cause for his interference, but it was not difficult to discern, by the earnest attention which he paid to Catharine Glover, that it was to her, rather than to her father, that he desired to dedicate his good offices. Generally speaking, there was no opportunity for his zeal displaying itself, for a common feeling of respect induced passengers to give way to the father and daughter.

But when the steel caps, barrets, and plumes of squires, archers, and men at-arms began to be seen among the throng, the wearers of these warlike distinctions were more rude in their demeanour than the quiet citizens. More than once, when from chance, or perhaps from an assumption of superior importance, such an individual took the wall of Simon in passing, the glover's youthful attendant bristled up with a look of defiance, and the

air of one who sought to distinguish his zeal in his mistress's service by its ardour. As frequently did Conachar, for such was the lad's name, receive a check from his master, who gave him to understand that he did not wish his interference before he required it. 'Foolish boy,' he said, 'hast thou not lived long enough in my shop to know that a blow will breed a brawl; that a dirk will cut the skin as fast as a needle pierces leather; that I love peace, though I never feared war, and care not which side of the causeway my daughter and I walk upon, so we may keep our road in peace and quietness?'

Conachar excused himself as zealous for his master's honour, yet was scarce able to pacify the old citizen.

'What have we to do with honour?' said Simon Glover. 'If thou wouldst remain in my service, thou must think of honesty, and leave honour to the swaggering fools who wear steel at their heels and iron on their shoulders. If you wish to wear and use such garniture, you are welcome, but it shall not be in my house or in my company.'

Conachar seemed rather to kindle at this rebuke than to submit to it. But a sign from Catharine, if that slight raising of her little finger was indeed a sign, had more effect than the angry reproof of his master; and the youth laid aside the military air which seemed natural to him, and relapsed into the humble follower of the quiet burgher.

Meantime the little party were overtaken by a tall young man wrapped in a cloak, which obscured or muffled a part of his face — a practice often used by the gallants of the time, when they did not wish to be known, or were abroad in quest of adventures. He seemed, in short, one who might say to the world around him, 'I desire, for the present, not to be known or addressed in my own character, but, as I am answerable to myself alone for my actions, I wear my incognito but for form's sake, and care little whether you see through it or not.' He came on the right side of Catharine, who had hold of her father's arm, and slackened his pace as if joining their party.

'Good even to you, goodman.'

'The same to your worship, and thanks. May I pray you to pass on? Our pace is too slow for that of your lordship, our company too mean for that of your father's son.'

'My father's son can best judge of that, old man. I have business to talk of with you and with my fair St. Catharine here, the loveliest and most obdurate saint in the calendar.'

'With deep reverence, my lord,' said the old man, 'I would

remind you that this is good St. Valentine's Eve, which is no time for business, and that I can have your worshipful commands by a serving-man as early as it pleases you to send them.'

'There is no time like the present,' said the persevering youth, whose rank seemed to be of a kind which set him above ceremony 'I wish to know whether the buff doublet be finished which I commissioned some time since, and from you, pretty Catharine (here he sank his voice to a whisper), I desire to be informed whether your fair fingers have been employed upon it, agreeably to your promise? But I need not ask you, for my poor heart has felt the pang of each puncture that pierced the garment which was to cover it. Traitor, how wilt thou answer for thus tormenting the heart that loves thee so dearly?'

'Let me entreat you, my lord,' said Catharine, 'to forego this wild talk it becomes not you to speak thus, or me to listen. We are of poor rank but honest manners, and the presence of the father ought to protect the child from such expressions, even from your lordship.'

This she spoke so low, that neither her father nor Conachar could understand what she said.

'Well, tyrant,' answered the persevering gallant, 'I will plague you no longer now, providing you will let me see you from your window to-morrow, when the sun first peeps over the eastern hill, and give me right to be your Valentine for the year.'

'Not so, my lord, my father but now told me that hawks, far less eagles, pair not with the humble linnet. Seek some court lady, to whom your favours will be honour, to me — your Highness must permit me to speak the plain truth — they can be nothing but disgrace.'

As they spoke thus, the party arrived at the gate of the church. 'Your lordship will, I trust, permit us here to take leave of you?' said her father. 'I am well aware how little you will alter your pleasure for the pain and uneasiness you may give to such as us, but, from the throng of attendants at the gate, your lordship may see that there are others in the church to whom even your gracious lordship must pay respect.'

'Yes — respect, and who pays any respect to me?' said the haughty young lord. 'A miserable artisan and his daughter, too much honoured by my slightest notice, have the insolence to tell me that my notice dishonours them. Well, my

princess of white doe-skin and blue silk, I will teach you to rue this'

As he murmured thus, the glover and his daughter entered the Dominican church, and their attendant, Conachar, in attempting to follow them closely, jostled, it may be not unwillingly, the young nobleman. The gallant, starting from his unpleasant reverie, and perhaps considering this as an intentional insult, seized on the young man by the breast, struck him, and threw him from him. His irritated opponent recovered himself with difficulty, and grasped towards his own side, as if seeking a sword or dagger in the place where it was usually worn, but finding none, he made a gesture of disappointed rage, and entered the church. During the few seconds he remained, the young nobleman stood with his arms folded on his breast, with a haughty smile, as if defying him to do his worst. When Conachar had entered the church, his opponent, adjusting his cloak yet closer about his face, made a private signal by holding up one of his gloves. He was instantly joined by two men, who, disguised like himself, had waited his motions at a little distance. They spoke together earnestly, after which the young nobleman retired in one direction, his friends or followers going off in another.

Simon Glover, before he entered the church, cast a look towards the group, but had taken his place among the congregation before they separated themselves. He knelt down with the air of a man who has something burdensome on his mind, but when the service was ended, he seemed free from anxiety, as one who had referred himself and his troubles to the disposal of Heaven. The ceremony of High Mass was performed with considerable solemnity, a number of noblemen and ladies of rank being present. Preparations had indeed been made for the reception of the good old King himself, but some of those infirmities to which he was subject had prevented Robert III. from attending the service as was his wont. When the congregation were dismissed, the glover and his beautiful daughter lingered for some time, for the purpose of making their several shrifts in the confessionals, where the priests had taken their places for discharging that part of their duty. Thus it happened that the night had fallen dark, and the way was solitary, when they returned along the now deserted streets to their own dwelling. Most persons had betaken themselves to home and to bed. They who still lingered in the street were night-walkers or revellers, the idle and swaggering retainers of

the haughty nobles, who were much wont to insult the peaceful passengers, relying on the impunity which their masters' court favour was too apt to secure them.

It was, perhaps, in apprehension of mischief from some character of this kind, that Conachar, stepping up to the glover, said, 'Master, walk faster — we are dogg'd.'

'Dogg'd, sayest thou? By whom and by how many?'

'By one man muffled in his cloak, who follows us like our shadow'

'Then will I never mend my pace along the Couvrefew Street for the best one man that ever trode it.'

'But he has arms,' said Conachar

'And so have we, and hands, and legs, and feet. Why, sure, Conachar, you are not afraid of one man?'

'Afraid!' answered Conachar, indignant at the insinuation, 'you shall soon know if I am afraid.'

'Now you are as far on the other side of the mark, thou foolish boy thy temper has no middle course, there is no occasion to make a brawl, though we do not run. Walk thou before with Catharine, and I will take thy place. We cannot be exposed to danger so near home as we are.'

The glover fell behind accordingly, and certainly observed a person keep so close to them as, the time and place considered, justified some suspicion. When they crossed the street, he also crossed it, and when they advanced or slackened their pace, the stranger's was in proportion accelerated or diminished. The matter would have been of very little consequence had Simon Glover been alone, but the beauty of his daughter might render her the object of some profligate scheme, in a country where the laws afforded such slight protection to those who had not the means to defend themselves. Conachar and his fair charge having arrived on the threshold of their own apartment, which was opened to them by an old female servant, the burgher's uneasiness was ended. Determined, however, to ascertain, if possible, whether there had been any cause for it, he called out to the man whose motions had occasioned the alarm, and who stood still, though he seemed to keep out of reach of the light. 'Come, step forward, my friend, and do not play at bo-peep, knowest thou not, that they who walk like phantoms in the dark are apt to encounter the conjuration of a quarter staff? Step forward, I say, and show us thy shapes, man.'

'Why, so I can, Master Glover,' said one of the deepest voices that ever answered question. 'I can show my shapes

well enough, only I wish they could bear the light something better.'

'Body of me,' exclaimed Simon, 'I should know that voice! And is it thou, in thy bodily person, Harry Gow? Nay, beshrew me if thou passest this door with dry lips. What, man, curfew has not rung yet, and if it had, it were no reason why it should part father and son. Come in, man, Dorothy shall get us something to eat, and we will jingle a can ere thou leave us. Come in, I say, my daughter Kate will be right glad to see thee.'

By this time he had pulled the person, whom he welcomed so cordially, into a sort of kitchen, which served also upon ordinary occasions the office of parlour. Its ornaments were trenchers of pewter, mixed with a silver cup or two, which, in the highest degree of cleanliness, occupied a range of shelves like those of a beauffet, popularly called 'the bink'. A good fire, with the assistance of a blazing lamp, spread light and cheerfulness through the apartment, and a savoury smell of some victuals which Dorothy was preparing did not at all offend the unrefined noses of those whose appetite they were destined to satisfy.

Their unknown attendant now stood in full light among them, and though his appearance was neither dignified nor handsome, his face and figure were not only deserving of attention, but seemed in some manner to command it. He was rather below the middle stature, but the breadth of his shoulders, length and brawniness of his arms, and the muscular appearance of the whole man, argued a most unusual share of strength, and a frame kept in vigour by constant exercise. His legs were somewhat bent, but not in a manner which could be said to approach to deformity, on the contrary, which seemed to correspond to the strength of his frame, though it injured in some degree its symmetry. His dress was of buff-hide, and he wore in a belt around his waist a heavy broadsword, and a dirk or poniard, as if to defend his purse, which (burgher-fashion) was attached to the same cincture. The head was well proportioned, round, close-cropped, and curled thickly with black hair. There was daring and resolution in the dark eye, but the other features seemed to express a bashful timidity, mingled with good-humour, and obvious satisfaction at meeting with his old friends. Abstracted from the bashful expression, which was that of the moment, the forehead of Henry Gow, or Smith, for he was indifferently so called, was high and noble, but the

lower part of the face was less happily formed. The mouth was large, and well furnished with a set of firm and beautiful teeth, the appearance of which corresponded with the air of personal health and muscular strength which the whole frame indicated. A short thick beard, and mustachios which had lately been arranged with some care, completed the picture. His age could not exceed eight-and twenty.

The family appeared all well pleased with the unexpected appearance of an old friend. Simon Glover shook his hand again and again, Dorothy made her compliments, and Catharine herself offered freely her hand, which Henry held in his massive grasp, as if he designed to carry it to his lips, but, after a moment's hesitation, desisted, from fear lest the freedom might be ill taken. Not that there was any resistance on the part of the little hand which lay passive in his grasp, but there was a smile mingled with the blush on her cheek, which seemed to increase the confusion of the gallant. Her father, on his part, called out frankly, as he saw his friend's hesitation —

'Her lips, man — her lips! and that's a proffer I would not make to every one who crosses my threshold. But, by good St. Valentine, whose holyday will dawn to morrow, I am so glad to see thee in the bonny city of Perth again, that it would be hard to tell the thing I could refuse thee.'

The smith, for, as has been said, such was the craft of this sturdy artisan, was encouraged modestly to salute the Fair Maid, who yielded the courtesy with a smile of affection that might have become a sister, saying, at the same time, 'Let me hope that I welcome back to Perth a repentant and amended man.'

He held her hand as if about to answer, then suddenly, as one who lost courage at the moment, relinquished his grasp, and drawing back as if afraid of what he had done, his dark countenance glowing with bashfulness, mixed with delight, he sat down by the fire on the opposite side from that which Catharine occupied.

'Come, Dorothy, speed thee with the food, old woman, and Conachar — where is Conachar?'

'He is gone to bed, sir, with a headache,' said Catharine, in a hesitating voice.

'Go, call him, Dorothy,' said the old glover, 'I will not be used thus by him. His Highland blood, forsooth, is too gentle to lay a trencher or spread a napkin, and he expects to enter our ancient and honourable craft without duly waiting and

tending upon his master and teacher in all matters of lawful obedience 'Go, call him, I say, I will not be thus neglected'

Dorothy was presently heard screaming upstairs, or more probably up a ladder, to the cock-loft, to which the recusant apprentice had made an untimely retreat, a muttered answer was returned, and soon after Conachar appeared in the eating-apartment. There was a gloom of deep sullenness on his haughty, though handsome, features, and as he proceeded to spread the board, and arrange the trenchers, with salt, spices, and other condiments—to discharge, in short, the duties of a modern domestic, which the custom of the time imposed upon all apprentices—he was obviously disgusted and indignant with the mean office imposed upon him. The Fair Maid of Perth looked with some anxiety at him, as if apprehensive that his evident sullenness might increase her father's displeasure, but it was not till her eyes had sought out his for a second time, that Conachar condescended to veil his dissatisfaction, and throw a greater appearance of willingness and submission into the services which he was performing.

And here we must acquaint our reader that, though the private interchange of looks betwixt Catharine Glover and the young mountaineer indicated some interest on the part of the former in the conduct of the latter, it would have puzzled the strictest observer to discover whether that feeling exceeded in degree what might have been felt by a young person towards a friend and inmate of the same age, with whom she had lived on habits of intimacy.

'Thou hast had a long journey, son Henry,' said Glover, who had always used that affectionate style of speech, though noways akin to the young artisan, 'ay, and hast seen many a river besides Tay, and many a fair bigging besides St Johnston'

'But none that I like half so well, and none that are half so much worth my liking,' answered the smith. 'I promise you, father, that, when I crossed the Wicks of Baighe, and saw the bonny city lie stretched fairly before me like a fairy queen in romance, whom the knight finds asleep among a wilderness of flowers, I felt even as a bird, when it folds its wearied wings to stoop down on its own nest'

'Aha! so thou canst play the maker¹ yet?' said the glover. 'What, shall we have our ballets and our roundels again? our

¹ Old Scottish for 'poet,' and indeed the literal translation of the original Greek ποιητής

rusty carols for Christmas, and our mirthful springs to trip it round the maypole !'

'Such toys there may be forthcoming, father,' said Henry Smith, 'though the blast of the bellows and the clatter of the anvil make but coarse company to lays of minstrelsy, but I can afford them no better, since I must mend my fortune, though I mar my verses.'

'Right again — my own son just,' answered the glover, 'and I trust thou hast made a saving voyage of it ?'

'Nay, I made a thriving one, father. I sold the steel habergeon that you wot of for four hundred marks to the English Warden of the East Marches, Sir Magnus Redman¹. He scarce scrupled a penny after I gave him leave to try a sword dint upon it. The beggarly Highland thief who bespoke it boggled at half the sum, though it had cost me a year's labour.'

'What dost thou start at, Conachar ?' said Simon, addressing himself, by way of parenthesis, to the mountain disciple, 'wilt thou never learn to mind thy own business, without listening to what is passing round thee ? What is it to thee that an Englishman thinks that cheap which a Scottishman may hold dear ?'

Conachar turned round to speak, but, after a moment's consideration, looked down, and endeavoured to recover his composure, which had been deranged by the contemptuous manner in which the smith had spoken of his Highland customer.

Henry went on without paying any attention to him. 'I sold at high prices some swords and whingers when I was at Edinburgh. They expect war there, and if it please God to send it, my merchandise will be worth its price. St. Dunstan make us thankful, for he was of our craft. In short, this fellow (laying his hand on his purse), who, thou knowest, father, was somewhat lank and low in condition when I set out four months since, is now as round and full as a six-weeks' porker.'

'And that other leathern sheathed, iron-hilted fellow who hangs beside him,' said the glover, 'has he been idle all this while ? Come, jolly smith, confess the truth — how many brawls hast thou had since crossing the Tay ?'

'Nay, now you do me wrong, father, to ask me such a question (glancing a look at Catharine) in such a presence,' answered the armourer. 'I make swords, indeed, but I leave it to other people to use them. No — no, seldom have I a naked

¹ Sir Magnus Redman, sometime Governor of Berwick, fell in one of the battles on the Border which followed on the treason of the Earl of March, alluded to hereafter.

sword in my fist, save when I am turning them on the anvil or grindstone, and they slandered me to your daughter Catharine, that led her to suspect the quietest buggess in Perth of being a brawler. I wish the best of them would dare say such a word at the Hill of Kinnoul, and never a man on the green but he and I'

'Ay — ay,' said the glover, laughing, 'we should then have a fine sample of your patient sufferance. Out upon you, Henry, that you will speak so like a knave to one who knows thee so well! You look at Kate, too, as if she did not know that a man in this country must make his hand keep his head, unless he will sleep in slender security. Come — come, beshrew me if thou hast not spoiled as many suits of armour as thou hast made'

'Why, he would be a bad armourer, father Simon, that could not with his own blow make proof of his own workmanship. If I did not sometimes cleave a helmet, or strike a sword's point through a harness, I should not know what strength of fabric to give them, and might jangle together such pasteboard work as yonder Edinburgh smiths think not shame to put out of their hands'

'Aha, now would I lay a gold crown thou hast had a quarrel with some Edinburgh "burn-the-wind"¹ upon that very ground?'

'A quarrel! no, father,' replied the Perth armourer, 'but a measuring of swords with such a one upon St Leonard's Crag, for the honour of my bonny city, I confess. Surely you do not think I would quarrel with a brother craftsman?'

'Ah, to a surety, no. But how did your brother craftsman come off?'

'Why, as one with a sheet of paper on his bosom might come off from the stroke of a lance, or rather, indeed, he came not off at all, for, when I left him, he was lying in the Hermit's Lodge daily expecting death, for which Father Gervis said he was in heavenly preparation'

'Well, any more measuring of weapons?' said the glover.

'Why, truly, I fought an Englishman at Berwick besides, on the old question of the supremacy, as they call it — I am sure you would not have me slack at that debate? — and I had the luck to hurt him on the left knee'

'Well done for St. Andrew' to it again. Whom next had

¹ 'Burn-the-wind,' an old cant term for blacksmith, appears in Burns —
Then burnewin came on like death,
At every chaup, etc

you to deal with?' said Simon, laughing at the exploits of his pacific friend.

'I fought a Scotchman in the 'Torwood,' answered Henry Smith, 'upon a doubt which was the better swordsman, which, you are aware, could not be known or decided without a trial. The poor fellow lost two fingers.'

'Pretty well for the most peaceful lad in Perth, who never touches a sword but in the way of his profession. Well, anything more to tell us?'

'Little, for the drubbing of a Highlandman is a thing not worth mentioning.'

'For what didst thou drub him, O man of peace?' inquired the glover

'For nothing that I can remember,' replied the smith, 'except his presenting himself on the south side of Stirling Bridge.'

'Well, here is to thee, and thou art welcome to me after all these exploits. Conachar, bestir thee. Let the cans clink, lad, and thou shalt have a cup of the nut-brown for thyself, my boy.'

Conachar poured out the good liquor for his master and for Catharine with due observance. But that done, he set the flagon on the table and sat down

'How now, sirrah! be these your manners? Fill to my guest, the worshipful Master Henry Smith.'

'Master Smith may fill for himself, if he wishes for liquor,' answered the youthful Celt. 'The son of my father has demeaned himself enough already for one evening.'

'That's well crowed for a cockerel,' said Henry, 'but thou art so far right, my lad, that the man deserves to die of thirst who will not drink without a cupbearer.'

But his entertainer took not the contumacy of the young apprentice with so much patience. 'Now, by my honest word, and by the best glove I ever made,' said Simon, 'thou shalt help him with liquor from that cup and flagon, if thee and I are to abide under one roof.'

Conachar arose sullenly upon hearing this threat, and, approaching the smith, who had just taken the tankard in his hand, and was raising it to his head, he contrived to stumble against him and jostle him so awkwardly, that the foaming ale gushed over his face, person, and dress. Good-natured as the smith, in spite of his warlike propensities, really was in the utmost degree, his patience failed under such a provocation.

He seized the young man's throat, being the part which came readiest to his grasp, as Conachar arose from the pretended stumble, and pressing it severely as he cast the lad from him, exclaimed, 'Had this been in another place, young gallows-bird, I had stowed the lugs out of thy head, as I have done to some of thy clan before thee'

Conachar recovered his feet with the activity of a tiger, and exclaiming, 'Never shall you live to make that boast again!' drew a short, sharp knife from his bosom, and, springing on Henry Smith, attempted to plunge it into his body over the collar-bone, which must have been a mortal wound. But the object of this violence was so ready to defend himself by striking up the assailant's hand, that the blow only glanced on the bone, and scarce drew blood. To wrench the dagger from the boy's hand, and to secure him with a grasp like that of his own iron vice, was, for the powerful smith, the work of a single moment. Conachar felt himself at once in the absolute power of the formidable antagonist whom he had provoked; he became deadly pale, as he had been the moment before glowing red, and stood mute with shame and fear, until, relieving him from his powerful hold, the smith quietly said, 'It is well for thee that thou canst not make me angry, thou art but a boy, and I, a grown man, ought not to have provoked thee. But let this be a warning'

Conachar stood an instant as if about to reply, and then left the room, ere Simon had collected himself enough to speak. Dorothy was running hither and thither for salves and healing herbs. Catharine had swooned at the sight of the trickling blood.

'Let me depart, father Simon,' said Henry Smith, mournfully, 'I might have guessed I should have my old luck, and spread strife and bloodshed where I would wish most to bring peace and happiness. Care not for me. Look to poor Catharine, the fright of such an affray hath killed her, and all through my fault.'

'Thy fault, my son! It was the fault of yon Highland cateran,¹ whom it is my curse to be cumbered with, but he shall go back to his glens to-morrow, or taste the tolbooth of the burgh. An assault upon the life of his master's guest in his master's house! It breaks all bonds between us.' But let me see to thy wound'

'Catharine!' repeated the armourer — 'look to Catharine'

¹ See Note 9

'Dorothy will see to her,' said Simon, 'surprise and fear kill not, skenes and dirks do. And she is not more the daughter of my blood than thou, my dear Henry, art the son of my affections. Let me see the wound. The skene-occle is an ugly weapon in a Highland hand.'

'I mind it no more than the scratch of a wildcat,' said the armourer, 'and now that the colour is coming to Catharine's cheek again, you shall see me a sound man in a moment.' He turned to a corner in which hung a small mirror, and hastily took from his purse some dry lint to apply to the slight wound he had received. As he unloosed the leathern jacket from his neck and shoulders, the manly and muscular form which they displayed was not more remarkable than the fairness of his skin, where it had not, as in hands and face, been exposed to the effects of rough weather and of his laborious trade. He hastily applied some lint to stop the bleeding, and a little water having removed all other marks of the fray, he buttoned his doublet anew, and turned again to the table, where Catharine, still pale and trembling, was, however, recovered from her fainting-fit.

'Would you but grant me your forgiveness for having offended you in the very first hour of my return? The lad was foolish to provoke me, and yet I was more foolish to be provoked by such as he. Your father blames me not, Catharine, and cannot you forgive me?'

'I have no power to forgive,' answered Catharine, 'what I have no title to resent. If my father chooses to have his house made the scene of night-brawls, I must witness them—I cannot help myself. Perhaps it was wrong in me to faint and interrupt, it may be, the farther progress of a fair fray. My apology is, that I cannot bear the sight of blood.'

'And is this the manner,' said her father, 'in which you receive my friend after his long absence? My friend, did I say? nay, my son. He escapes being murdered by a fellow whom I will to-morrow clear this house of, and you treat him as if he had done wrong in dashing from him the snake which was about to sting him!'

'It is not my part, father,' returned the Maid of Perth, 'to decide who had the right or wrong in the present brawl, nor did I see what happened distinctly enough to say which was assaillant, or which defender. But sure our friend, Master Henry, will not deny that he lives in a perfect atmosphere of strife, blood, and quarrels. He hears of no swordsman but he

envies his reputation, and must needs put his valour to the proof. He sees no brawl but he must strike into the midst of it. Has he friends, he fights with them for love and honour, has he enemies, he fights with them for hatred and revenge. And those men who are neither his friends nor foes, he fights with them because they are on this or that side of a river. His days are days of battle, and, doubtless, he acts them over again in his dreams.

'Daughter,' said Simon, 'your tongue wags too freely. Quarrels and fights are men's business, not women's, and it is not maidenly to think or speak of them.'

'But if they are so rudely enacted in our presence,' said Catharine, 'it is a little hard to expect us to think or speak of anything else. I will grant you, my father, that this valiant burghess of Perth is one of the best-hearted men that draws breath within its walls that he would walk a hundred yards out of the way rather than step upon a worm, that he would be as loth, in wantonness, to kill a spider as if he were a kinsman to King Robert, of happy memory,¹ that in the last quarrel before his departure he fought with four butchers, to prevent their killing a poor mastiff that had misbehaved in the bull-ring, and narrowly escaped the fate of the cur that he was protecting. I will grant you also, that the poor never pass the house of the wealthy armourer but they are relieved with food and alms. But what avails all this, when his sword makes as many starving orphans and mourning widows as his purse relieves?'

'Nay, but, Catharine, hear me but a word before going on with a string of reproaches against my friend, that sound something like sense, while they are, in truth, inconsistent with all we hear and see around us. What,' continued the Glover, 'do our King and our court, our knights and ladies, our abbots, monks, and priests themselves, so earnestly crowd to see? Is it not to behold the display of chivalry, to witness the gallant actions of brave knights in the tilt and tourney-ground, to look upon deeds of honour and glory achieved by arms and bloodshed? What is it these proud knights do, that differs from what our good Henry Gow works out in his sphere? Who ever heard of his abusing his skill and strength to do evil or forward oppression, and who knows not how often it has been employed as that of a champion in the good cause of the burgh? And shouldst not thou, of all women, deem thyself honoured and

¹ See Robert Bruce Note 10

glorious, that so true a heart and so strong an arm has, termed himself thy bachelor? In what do the proudest dames take their loftiest pride, save in the chivalry of their knight, and has the boldest in Scotland done more gallant deeds than my brave son Henry, though but of low degree? Is he not known to Highland and Lowland as the best armourer that ever made sword, and the truest soldier that ever drew one?’

‘My dearest father,’ answered Catharine, ‘your words contradict themselves, if you will permit your child to say so. Let us thank God and the good saints that we are in a peaceful rank of life, below the notice of those whose high birth, and yet higher pride, lead them to glory in their bloody works of cruelty, which haughty and lordly men term deeds of chivalry. Your wisdom will allow that it would be absurd in us to prank ourselves in their dainty plumes and splendid garments, why, then, should we imitate their full-blown vices? Why should we assume their hard-hearted pride and relentless cruelty, to which murder is not only a sport, but a subject of vainglorious triumph? Let those whose rank claims as its right such bloody homage take pride and pleasure in it, we, who have no share in the sacrifice, may the better pity the sufferings of the victim. Let us thank our lowliness, since it secures us from temptation. But forgive me, father, if I have stepped over the limits of my duty, in contradicting the views which you entertain, with so many others, on these subjects.’

‘Nay, thou hast even too much talk for me, girl,’ said her father, somewhat angrily. ‘I am but a poor workman, whose best knowledge is to distinguish the left-hand glove from the right. But if thou wouldst have my forgiveness, say something of comfort to my poor Henry. There he sits, confounded and dismayed with all the preachment thou hast heaped together, and he, to whom a trumpet-sound was like the invitation to a feast, is struck down at the sound of a child’s whistle.’

The armourer, indeed, while he heard the lips that were dearest to him paint his character in such unfavourable colours, had laid his head down on the table, upon his folded arms, in an attitude of the deepest dejection, or almost despair. ‘I would to Heaven, my dearest father,’ answered Catharine, ‘that it were in my power to speak comfort to Henry, without betraying the sacred cause of the truths I have just told you. And I may — nay, I must have such a commission,’ she continued with something that the earnestness with which she spoke, and the extreme beauty of her features, caused for the moment to

resemble inspiration 'The truth of Heaven,' she said, in a solemn tone, 'was never committed to a tongue, however feeble, but it gave a right to that tongue to announce mercy, while it declared judgment Arise, Henry — rise up, noble-minded, good, and generous, though widely mistaken man Thy faults are those of this cruel and remorseless age, thy virtues all thine own'

While she thus spoke, she laid her hand upon the smith's arm, and extricating it from under his head by a force which, however gentle, he could not resist, she compelled him to raise towards her his manly face, and the eyes into which her expostulations, mingled with other feelings, had summoned tears 'Weep not,' she said, 'or rather, weep on, but weep as those who have hope Abjure the sins of pride and anger, which most easily beset thee, fling from thee the accursed weapons, to the fatal and murderous use of which thou art so easily tempted'

'You speak to me in vain, Catharine,' returned the armourer 'I may, indeed, turn monk and retire from the world, but while I live in it I must practise my trade, and while I form armour and weapons for others, I cannot myself withstand the temptation of using them You would not reproach me as you do, if you knew how inseparably the means by which I gain my bread are connected with that warlike spirit which you impute to me as a fault, though it is the consequence of inevitable necessity While I strengthen the shield or corslet to withstand wounds, must I not have constantly in remembrance the manner and strength with which they may be dealt, and when I forge the sword, and temper it for war, is it practicable for me to avoid the recollection of its use?'

'Then throw from you, my dear Henry,' said the enthusiastic girl, clasping with both her slender hands the nervous strength and weight of one of the muscular armourer's, which they raised with difficulty, permitted by its owner, yet scarcely receiving assistance from his volition — 'cast from you, I say, the art which is a snare to you Abjure the fabrication of weapons which can only be useful to abridge human life, already too short for repentance, or to encourage with a feeling of safety those whom fear might otherwise prevent from risking themselves in peril The art of forming arms, whether offensive or defensive, is alike sinful in one to whose violent and ever vehement disposition the very working upon them proves a sin and a snare Resign utterly the manufacture of weapons of every

description, and deserve the forgiveness of Heaven, by renouncing all that can lead to the sin which most easily besets you'

'And what,' murmured the armourer, 'am I to do for my livelihood, when I have given over the art of forging arms, for which Henry of Perth is known from the Tay to the Thames?'

'Your art itself,' said Catharine, 'has innocent and laudable resources. If you renounce the forging of swords and bucklers, there remains to you the task of forming' the harmless spade, and the honourable as well as useful ploughshare — of those implements which contribute to the support of life, or to its comforts. Thou canst frame locks and bars to defend the property of the weak against the stouthrief and oppression of the strong. Men will still resort to thee, and repay thy honest industry —'

But here Catharine was interrupted. Her father had heard her declaim against war and tournaments with a feeling that, though her doctrines were new to him, they might not, nevertheless, be entirely erroneous. He felt, indeed, a wish that his proposed son-in-law should not commit himself voluntarily to the hazards which the daring character and great personal strength of Henry the Smith had hitherto led him to incur too readily, and so far he would rather have desired that Catharine's arguments should have produced some effect upon the mind of her lover, whom he knew to be as ductile when influenced by his affections as he was fierce and intractable when assailed by hostile remonstrances or threats. But her arguments interfered with his views, when he heard her enlarge upon the necessity of his designed son-in-law resigning a trade which brought in more ready income than any at that time practised in Scotland, and more profit to Henry of Perth, in particular, than to any armourer in the nation. He had some indistinct idea that it would not be amiss to convert, if possible, Henry the Smith from his too frequent use of arms, even though he felt some pride in being connected with one who wielded with such superior excellence those weapons, which in that warlike age it was the boast of all men to manage with spirit. But when he heard his daughter recommend, as the readiest road to this pacific state of mind, that her lover should renounce the gainful trade in which he was held unrivalled, and which, from the constant private differences and public wars of the time, was sure to afford him a large income, he could withhold his wrath no longer. The daughter had scarce recommended to her lover the fabrication of the implements of husbandry, than, feeling

So I will empty a cup to the soul's health of my honoured father — May his sins be forgiven him ! Dorothy, thou shalt drink this pledge, and then be gone to thy cock-loft I know thine ears are itching, girl, but I have that to say which no one must hear save Henry Smith, the son of mine adoption'

Dorothy did not venture to remonstrate, but, taking off her glass, or rather her goblet, with good courage, retired to her sleeping-apartment, according to her master's commands

The two friends were left alone

'It grieves me, friend Henry,' said Simon, filling at the same time his own glass and his guest's — 'it grieves me from my soul that my daughter retains this silly humour, but also, methinks, thou mightst mend it Why wouldst thou come hither clattering with thy sword and dagger, when the girl is so silly that she cannot bear the sight of these? Dost thou not remember that thou hadst a sort of quarrel with her even before thy last departure from Perth, because thou wouldst not go like other honest quiet burghers, but must be ever armed, like one of the rascally jackmen that wait on the nobility? Sure it is time enough for decent burgesses to arm at the tolling of the common bell, which calls us out bodin in effer of war'¹

'Why, my good father, that was not my fault, but I had no sooner quitted my nag than I run hither to tell you of my return, thinking, if it were your will to permit me, that I would get your advice about being Mistress Catharine's Valentine for the year, and then I heard from Mrs Dorothy that you were gone to hear mass at the Black Friars So I thought I would follow thither, partly to hear the same mass with you, and partly — Our Lady and St. Valentine forgive me ! — to look upon one who thinks little enough of me And, as you entered the church, methought I saw two or three dangerous-looking men holding counsel together, and gazing at you and at her, and in especial Sir John Ramorny, whom I knew well enough, for all his disguise, and the velvet patch over his eye, and his cloak so like a serving-man's, so methought, father Simon, that, as you were old, and yonder slip of a Highlander something too young to do battle, I would even walk quietly after you, not doubting, with the tools I had about me, to bring any one to reason that might disturb you in your way home You know that yourself discovered me, and drew me into the house, whether I would or no, otherwise, I promise you, I would not

¹ See Note 12

have seen your daughter till I had donn'd the new jerkin which was made at Berwick after the latest cut, nor would I have appeared before her with these weapons, which she dislikes so much. Although, to say truth, so many are at deadly feud with me for one unhappy chance or another, that it is as needful for me as for any man in Scotland to go by night with weapons about me.'

'The silly wench never thinks of that,' said Simon Glover 'she never has sense to consider, that in our dear native land of Scotland every man deems it his privilege and duty to avenge his own wrong. But, Harry, my boy, thou art to blame for taking her talk so much to heart. I have seen thee bold enough with other wenches, wherefore so still and tongue tied with her?'

'Because she is something different from other maidens, father Glover—because she is not only more beautiful, but wiser, higher, holier, and seems to me as if she were made of better clay than we that approach her. I can hold my head high enough with the rest of the lasses round the maypole, but somehow, when I approach Catharine, I feel myself an earthly, coarse, ferocious creature, scarce worthy to look on her, much less to contradict the precepts which she expounds to me.'

'You are an imprudent merchant, Harry Smith,' replied Simon, 'and rate too high the goods you wish to purchase. Catharine is a good girl, and my daughter, but if you make her a concerted ape by your bashfulness and your flattery, neither you nor I will see our wishes accomplished.'

'I often fear it, my good father,' said the smith, 'for I feel how little I am deserving of Catharine.'

'Feel a thread's end!' said the glover, 'feel for me, friend Smith—for Catharine and me. Think how the poor thing is beset from morning to night, and by what sort of persons, even though windows be down and doors shut. We were accosted to day by one too powerful to be named—ay, and he showed his displeasure openly, because I would not permit him to gallant my daughter in the church itself, when the priest was saying mass. There are others scarce less reasonable. I sometimes wish that Catharine were some degrees less fair, that she might not catch that dangerous sort of admiration, or somewhat less holy, that she might sit down like an honest woman, contented with stout Henry Smith, who could protect his wife against every sprig of chivalry in the court of Scotland.'

'And if I did not,' said Henry, thrusting out a hand and

the certainty of being right, of which in the earlier part of their debate he had been somewhat doubtful, the father broke in with —

‘Locks and bars, plough-giaith and harrow-teeth’ and why not grates and fire-prongs, and Culross girdle,¹ and an ass to carry the merchandise through the country, and thou for another ass to lead it by the halter? Why, Catharine, girl, has sense altogether forsaken thee, or dost thou think that in these hard and iron days men will give ready silver for anything save that which can defend their own life, or enable them to take that of their enemy? We want swords to protect ourselves every moment now, thou silly wench, and not ploughs to dress the ground for the grain we may never see rise. As for the matter of our daily bread, those who are strong seize it, and live, those who are weak yield it, and die of hunger. Happy is the man who, like my worthy son, has means of obtaining his living otherwise than by the point of the sword which he makes. Preach peace to him as much as thou wilt, I will never be he will say thee nay, but as for bidding the first armourer in Scotland forego the forging of swords, curtal axes, and harness, it is enough to drive patience itself mad. Out from my sight’ and next morning I prithee remember that, shouldst thou have the luck to see Henry the Smith, which is more than thy usage of him has deserved, you see a man who has not his match in Scotland at the use of broadsword and battle-axe, and who can work for five hundred marks a-year without breaking a holyday.’

The daughter, on hearing her father speak thus peremptorily, made a low obeisance, and, without further good-night, withdrew to the chamber which was her usual sleeping-apartment

¹ See Note 11

CHAPTER III

Whence cometh Smith, be he knight, lord, or squire,
But from the smith that forged in the fire?

VERSTEGAN

THE armourer's heart swelled big with various and contending sensations, so that it seemed as if it would burst the leathern doublet under which it was shrouded. He arose, turned away his head, and extended his hand towards the glover, while he averted his face, as if desirous that his emotion should not be read upon his countenance.

'Nay, hang me if I bid you farewell, man,' said Simon, striking the flat of his hand against that which the armourer expanded towards him. 'I will shake no hands with you for an hour to come at least. Tarry but a moment, man, and I will explain all this, and surely a few drops of blood from a scratch, and a few silly words from a foolish wench's lips, are not to part father and son when they have been so long without meeting? Stay, then, man, if ever you would wish for a father's blessing and St. Valentine's, whose blessed eve this chances to be.'

The glover was soon heard loudly summoning Dorothy, and, after some clanking of keys and trampling up and down stairs, Dorothy appeared bearing three large rummer cups of green glass, which were then esteemed a great and precious curiosity, and the glover followed with a huge bottle, equal at least to three quarts of these degenerate days. 'Here is a cup of wine, Henry, older by half than I am myself, my father had it in a gift from stout old Crabbe, the Flemish engineer, who defended Perth so stoutly in the minority of David the Second. We glovers could always do something in war, though our connexion with it was less than yours who work in steel and iron. And my father had pleased old Crabbe, some other day I will tell you how, and also how long these bottles were concealed under ground, to save them from the reiving Southron

arm which might have belonged to a giant for bone and muscle, 'I would I may never bring hammer upon anvil again' Ay, an it were come but that length, my fair Catharine should see that there is no harm in a man having the trick of defence. But I believe she thinks the whole world is one great minster-church, and that all who live in it should behave as if they were at an eternal mass'

'Nay, in truth,' said the father, 'she has strange influence over those who approach her, the Highland lad, Conachar, with whom I have been troubled for these two or three years, although you may see he has the natural spirit of his people, obeys the least sign which Catharine makes him, and, indeed, will hardly be ruled by any one else in the house. She takes much pains with him to bring him from his rude Highland habits'

Here Harry Smith became uneasy in his chair, lifted the flagon, set it down, and at length exclaimed, 'The devil take the young Highland whelp and his whole kindred' What has Catharine to do to instruct such a fellow as he? He will be just like the wolf-cub that I was fool enough to train to the offices of a dog, and every one thought him reclaimed, till, in an ill hour, I went to walk on the hill of Moncrieff, when he broke loose on the laird's flock, and made a havoc that I might well have rued, had the laird not wanted a harness at the time. And I marvel that you, being a sensible man, father Glover, will keep this Highland young fellow — a likely one, I promise you — so nigh to Catharine, as if there were no other than your daughter to serve him for a schoolmistress'

'Fie, my son — fie, now you are jealous,' said Simon, 'of a poor young fellow who, to tell you the truth, resides here because he may not so well live on the other side of the hill'

'Ay — ay, father Simon,' retorted the smith, who had all the narrow-minded feelings of the burghers of his time, 'an it were not for fear of offence, I would say that you have even too much packing and peiling with yonder loons out of burgh.'

'I must get my deer-hides, buck-skins, kid-skins, and so forth somewhere, my good Harry, and Highlandmen give good bargains'

'They can afford them,' replied Henry, drily, 'for they sell nothing but stolen gear'

'Well — well, be that as it may, it is not my business where they get the bestial, so I get the hides. But as I was saying, there are certain considerations why I am willing to oblige the father of this young man, by keeping him here. And he is but

half a Highlander neither, and wants a thought of the dour spirit of a "glune-amie",¹ after all, I have seldom seen him so fierce as he showed himself but now'

'You could not, unless he had killed his man,' replied the smith, in the same dry tone

'Nevertheless, if you wish it, Harry, I'll set all other respects aside, and send the landlouser to seek other quarters to-morrow morning'

'Nay, father,' said the smith, 'you cannot suppose that Harry Gow cares the value of a smithy dander for such a cub as yonder cat-a mountain? I care little, I promise you, though all his clan were coming down the Shoegate² with slogan crying and pipes playing I would find fifty blades and bucklers would send them back faster than they came. But, to speak truth though it is a fool's speech too, I care not to see the fellow so much with Catharine. Remember, father Glover, your trade keeps your eyes and hands close employed, and must have your heedful care, even if this lazy lurdane wrought at it, which you know yourself he seldom does'

'And that is true,' said Simon 'he cuts all his gloves out for the right hand, and never could finish a pair in his life.'

'No doubt, his notions of skin cutting are rather different,' said Henry 'But with your leave, father, I would only say that, work he or be he idle, he has no bleared eyes, no hands seared with the hot iron, and welked by the use of the fore-hammer, no hair rusted in the smoke, and singed in the furnace, like the hide of a badger, rather than what is fit to be covered with a Christian bonnet. Now, let Catharine be as good a wench as ever lived, and I will uphold her to be the best in Perth, yet she must see and know that these things make a difference betwixt man and man, and that the difference is not in my favour'

'Here is to thee, with all my heart, son Harry,' said the old man, filling a brimmer to his companion and another to himself, 'I see that, good smith as thou art, thou ken'st not the mettle that women are made of. Thou must be bold, Henry, and bear thyself not as if thou wert going to the gallows lee, but like a gay young fellow, who knows his own worth and will not be slighted by the best grandchild Eve ever had. Catharine is a woman like her mother, and thou thinkest foolishly to suppose they are all set on what pleases the eye. Their ear must be pleased too, man they must know that he

¹ See Note 13

² A principal street in Perth.

whom they favour is bold and buxom, and might have the love of twenty, though he is sung for theirs. Believe an old man, women walk more by what others think than by what they think themselves, and when she asks for the boldest man in Perth, whom shall she hear named but Harry Burn-the-wind? The best armourer that ever fashioned weapon on anvil? Why, Harry Smith again. The tightest dancer at the maypole? Why, the lusty smith. The gayest troller of ballads? Why, who but Harry Gow? The best wrestler, sword-and-buckler player, the king of the weapon-shawing, the breaker of mad horses, the tamer of wild Highlandmen? Evermore it is thee — thee — no one but thee. And shall Catharine prefer yonder slip of a Highland boy to *thee*? Pshaw! she might as well make a steel gauntlet out of kid's leather. I tell thee, Conachar is nothing to her, but so far as she would fain prevent the devil having his due of him, as of other Highlandmen. God bless her, poor thing, she would bring all mankind to better thoughts if she could.'

'In which she will fail to a certainty,' said the smith, who, as the reader may have noticed, had no good-will to the Highland race. 'I will wager on Old Nick, of whom I should know something, he being indeed a worker in the same element with myself, against Catharine on that debate the devil will have the tartan, that is sure enough.'

'Ay, but Catharine,' replied the glover, 'hath a second thou knowest little of. Father Clement has taken the young reiver in hand, and he fears a hundred devils as little as I do a flock of geese.'

'Father Clement!' said the smith. 'You are always making some new saint in this godly city of St Johnston. Pray, who, for a devil's drubber, may he be? One of your hermits that is trained for the work like a wrestler for the ring, and brings himself to trim by fasting and penance, is he not?'

'No, that is the marvel of it,' said Simon. 'Father Clement eats, drinks, and lives much like other folks — all the rules of the church, nevertheless, strictly observed.'

'Oh, I comprehend! — a buxom priest that thinks more of good living than of good life, tipples a can on Fastern's Eve, to enable him to face Lent, has a pleasant *in principio*, and confesses all the prettiest women about the town?'

'You are on the bow-hand still, smith. I tell you, my daughter and I could nose out either a fasting hypocrite or a full one. But Father Clement is neither the one nor the other.'

'But what is he then, in Heaven's name?'

'One who is either greatly better than half his brethren of St. Johnston put together, or so much worse than the worst of them, that it is sin and shame that he is suffered to abide in the country.'

'Methinks it were easy to tell whether he be the one or the other,' said the smith.

'Content you, my friend,' said Simon, 'with knowing that, if you judge Father Clement by what you see him do and hear him say, you will think of him as the best and kindest man in the world, with a comfort for every man's grief, a counsel for every man's difficulty, the rich man's surest guide, and the poor man's best friend. But if you listen to what the Dominicans say of him, he is — *Benedicite!* (here the glover crossed himself on brow and bosom) — a foul heretic, who ought by means of earthly flames to be sent to those which burn eternally.'

'The smith also crossed himself, and exclaimed, 'St. Mary! father Simon, and do you, who are so good and prudent that you have been called the Wise Glover of Perth, let your daughter attend the ministry of one who — the saints preserve us! — may be in league with the foul fiend himself? Why, was it not a priest who raised the devil in the Meal Vennel, when Hodge Jackson's house was blown down in the great wind? Did not the devil appear in the midst of the Tay, dressed in a priest's scapular, gambolling like a peltack amongst the waves, the morning when our stately bridge was swept away?'

'I cannot tell whether he did or no,' said the glover, 'I only know I saw him not. As to Catharine, she cannot be said to use Father Clement's ministry, seeing her confessor is old Father Francis the Dominican, from whom she had her shrift to day. But women will sometimes be wilful, and sure enough she consults with Father Clement more than I could wish, and yet when I have spoken with him myself, I have thought him so good and holy a man, that I could have trusted my own salvation with him. There are bad reports of him among the Dominicans, that is certain. But what have we laymen to do with such things, my son? Let us pay Mother Church her dues, give our alms, confess and do our penances duly, and the saints will bear us out.'

'Ay, truly, and they will have consideration,' said the smith, 'for any rash and unhappy blow that a man may deal in a fight, when his party was on defence, and standing up to him,

and that's the only creed a man can live upon in Scotland, let your daughter think what she pleases. Mairry, a man must know his fence, or have a short lease of his life, in any place where blows are going so rife. Five nobles to our altar have cleared me for the best man I ever had misfortune with.'

'Let us finish our flask, then,' said the old glover, 'for I reckon the Dominican tower is tolling midnight. And hark thee, son Henry, be at the lattice window on our east gable by the very peep of dawn, and make me aware thou art come by whistling the smith's call gently. I will contrive that Catharine shall look out at the window, and thus thou wilt have all the privileges of being a gallant Valentine through the rest of the year, which, if thou canst not use to thine own advantage, I shall be led to think that, for all thou be'st covered with the lion's hide, nature has left on thee the long ears of the ass.'

'Amen, father,' said the armourer, 'a hearty good-night to you, and God's blessing on your roof-tree, and those whom it covers. You shall hear the smith's call sound by cock-crowing, I warrant I put sir chanticleer to shame.'

So saying, he took his leave, and, though completely undaunted, moved through the deserted streets like one upon his guard, to his own dwelling, which was situated in the Mill Wynd, at the western end of Perth.

CHAPTER IV

What's all this turmoil crammed into our parts?
Faith, but the pit-a-pat of poor young hearts

DRYDEN

THE sturdy armourer was not, it may be believed, slack in keeping the appointment assigned by his intended father-in-law. He went through the process of his toilet with more than ordinary care, throwing, as far as he could, those points which had a military air into the shade. He was far too noted a person to venture to go entirely unarmed in a town where he had indeed many friends, but also, from the character of many of his former exploits, several deadly enemies, at whose hands, should they take him at advantage, he knew he had little mercy to expect. He therefore wore under his jerkin a 'secret,' or coat of chain-mail, made so light and flexible that it interfered as little with his movements as a modern under-waistcoat, yet of such proof as he might safely depend upon, every ring of it having been wrought and joined by his own hands. Above this he wore, like others of his age and degree, the Flemish hose and doublet, which, in honour of the holytide, were of the best superfine English broadcloth, light blue in colour, slashed out with black satin, and passamented (laced, that is) with embroidery of black silk. His walking-boots were of cordovan leather, his cloak of good Scottish grey, which served to conceal a whinger, or *couteau de chasse*, that hung at his belt, and was his only offensive weapon, for he carried in his hand but a rod of holly. His black velvet bonnet was lined with steel, quilted between the metal and his head, and thus constituted a means of defence which might safely be trusted to.

Upon the whole, Henry had the appearance, to which he was well entitled, of a burgher of wealth and consideration, assuming, in his dress, as much consequence as he could display, without stepping beyond his own rank, and encroaching

on that of the gentry Neither did his fiark and manly deportment, though indicating a total indifference to danger, bear the least resemblance to that of the bravoos or swashbucklers of the day, amongst whom Henry was sometimes unjustly ranked by those who imputed the frays in which he was so often engaged to a quarrelsome and violent temper, resting upon a consciousness of his personal strength and knowledge of his weapon On the contrary, every feature bore the easy and good-humoured expression of one who neither thought of inflicting mischief nor dreaded it from others.

Having attired himself in his best, the honest armourer next placed nearest to his heart (which throbbed at its touch) a little gift which he had long provided for Catharine Glover; and which his quality of Valentine would presently give him the title to present, and her to receive, without regard to maidenly scruples It was a small ruby cut into the form of a heart, transfixcd with a golden arrow, and was inclosed in a small purse made of links of the finest work in steel, as if it had been designed for a haubeik to a king Round the verge of the purse were these words

Love's darts
Cleave hearts
Through mail-shirts.

This device had cost the armourer some thought, and he was much satisfied with his composition, because it seemed to imply that his skill could defend all hearts saving his own He wrapped himself in his cloak, and hastened through the still silent streets, determined to appear at the window appointed a little before dawn

With this purpose he passed up the High Street,¹ and turned down the opening where St John's Church now stands, in order to proceed to Curfew Street,² when it occurred to him, from the appearance of the sky, that he was at least an hour too early for his purpose, and that it would be better not to appear at the place of rendezvous till nearer the time assigned Other gallants were not unlikely to be on the watch as well as himself about the house of the Fair Maid of Perth, and he knew his own foible so well as to be sensible of the great chance of a scuffle arising betwixt them 'I have the advantage,' he thought, 'by my father Simon's friendship, and why should I stain my fingers with the blood

¹ See Note 14

² See Note 15

of the poor creatures that are not worthy my notice, since they are so much less fortunate than myself? No — no, I will be wise for once, and keep at a distance from all temptation to a broil. They shall have no more tune to quarrel with me than just what it may require for me to give the signal, and for my father Simon to answer it. I wonder how the old man will contrive to bring her to the window? I fear, if she knew his purpose, he would find it difficult to carry it into execution.'

While these lover like thoughts were passing through his brain, the armourer loitered in his pace, often turning his eyes eastward, and eyeing the firmament, in which no slight shades of grey were beginning to flicker, to announce the approach of dawn, however distant, which, to the impatience of the stout armourer, seemed on that morning to abstain longer than usual from occupying her eastern barbican. He was now passing slowly under the wall of St. Anne's Chapel (not failing to cross himself and say an *ave*, as he trode the consecrated ground), when a voice, which seemed to come from behind one of the flying buttresses of the chapel, said, 'He lingers that has need to run.'

'Who speaks?' said the armourer, looking around him, somewhat startled at an address so unexpected, both in its tone and tenor.

'No matter who speaks,' answered the same voice. 'Do thou make great speed, or thou wilt scarce make good speed. Bandy not words, but begone.'

'Saint or sinner, angel or devil,' said Henry, crossing himself, 'your advice touches me but too dearly to be neglected. St. Valentine be my speed!'

So saying, he instantly changed his loitering pace to one with which few people could have kept up, and in an instant was in Couvrefew Street. He had not made three steps towards Simon Glover's, which stood in the midst of the narrow street, when two men started from under the houses on different sides, and advanced, as it were by concert, to intercept his passage. The imperfect light only permitted him to discern that they wore the Highland mantle.

'Clear the way, cateran,' said the armourer, in the deep stern voice which corresponded with the breadth of his chest.

They did not answer, at least intelligibly, but he could see that they drew their swords, with the purpose of withstanding him by violence. Conjecturing some evil, but of what kind he could not anticipate, Henry instantly determined to make his

way through whatever odds, and defend his mistress, or at least die at her feet. He cast his cloak over his left arm as a buckler, and advanced rapidly and steadily to the two men. The nearest made a thrust at him, but Henry Smith, parrying the blow with his cloak, dashed his arm in the man's face, and tripping him at the same time, gave him a severe fall on the causeway, while almost at the same instant he struck a blow with his whinger at the fellow who was upon his right hand, so severely applied, that he also lay prostrate by his associate. Meanwhile, the armourer pushed forward in alarm, for which the circumstance of the street being guarded or defended by strangers who conducted themselves with such violence afforded sufficient reason. He heard a suppressed whisper and a bustle under the glover's windows—those very windows from which he had expected to be hailed by Catharine as her Valentine. He kept to the opposite side of the street, that he might reconnoitre their number and purpose. But one of the party who were beneath the window, observing or hearing him, crossed the street also, and taking him doubtless for one of the sentinels, asked, in a whisper, 'What noise was yonder, Kenneth? why gave you not the signal?'

'Villain,' said Henry, 'you are discovered, and you shall die the death.'

As he spoke thus, he dealt the stranger a blow with his weapon, which would probably have made his words good, had not the man, raising his arm, received on his hand the blow meant for his head. The wound must have been a severe one, for he staggered and fell with a deep groan. Without noticing him farther, Henry Smith sprung forward upon a party of men who seemed engaged in placing a ladder against the lattice window in the gable. Henry did not stop either to count their numbers or to ascertain their purpose. But, crying the alarm-word of the town, and giving the signal at which the burghers were wont to collect, he rushed on the night-walkers, one of whom was in the act of ascending the ladder. The smith seized it by the rounds, threw it down on the pavement, and placing his foot on the body of the man who had been mounting, prevented him from regaining his feet. His accomplices struck fiercely at Henry, to extricate their companion. But his mail-coat stood him in good stead, and he repaid their blows with interest, shouting aloud, 'Help—help, for bonny St Johnston! Bows and blades, brave citizens! bows and blades! they break into our houses under cloud of night.'

These words, which resounded far through the streets, were accompanied by as many fierce blows, dealt with good effect among those whom the armourer assailed. In the meantime, the inhabitants of the district began to awaken and appear on the street in their shirts, with swords and targets, and some of them with torches. The assailants now endeavoured to make their escape, which all of them effected excepting the man who had been thrown down along with the ladder. Him the intrepid armourer had caught by the throat in the scuffle, and held as fast as the greyhound holds the hare. The other wounded men were borne off by their comrades.

'Here are a sort of knaves breaking peace within burgh,' said Henry to the neighbours who began to assemble, 'make after the rogues. They cannot all get off, for I have maimed some of them: the blood will guide you to them.'

'Some Highland caterans,' said the citizens, 'up and chase, neighbours!'

'Ay, chase—chase! leave me to manage this fellow,' continued the armourer.

The assistants dispersed in different directions, their lights flashing and their cries resounding through the whole adjacent district.

In the meantime the armourer's captive entreated for freedom, using both promises and threats to obtain it. 'As thou art a gentleman,' he said, 'let me go, and what is past shall be forgiven.'

'I am no gentleman,' said Henry—'I am Hal of the Wynd, a burghess of Perth, and I have done nothing to need forgiveness.'

'Villain, thou hast done thou knowest not what! But let me go, and I will fill thy bonnet with gold pieces.'

'I shall fill thy bonnet with a cloven head presently,' said the armourer, 'unless thou stand still as a true prisoner.'

'What is the matter, my son Harry?' said Simon, who now appeared at the window. 'I hear thy voice in another tone than I expected. What is all this noise, and why are the neighbours gathering to the affray?'

'There have been a proper set of limmers about to scale your windows, father Simon, but I am like to prove godfather to one of them, whom I hold here, as fast as ever vice held iron.'

'Hear me, Simon Glover,' said the prisoner, 'let me but speak one word with you in private, and rescue me from the gripe of this iron-fisted and leaden-pated clown, and I will show

thee that no harm was designed to thee or thine, and, moreover, tell thee what will much advantage thee'

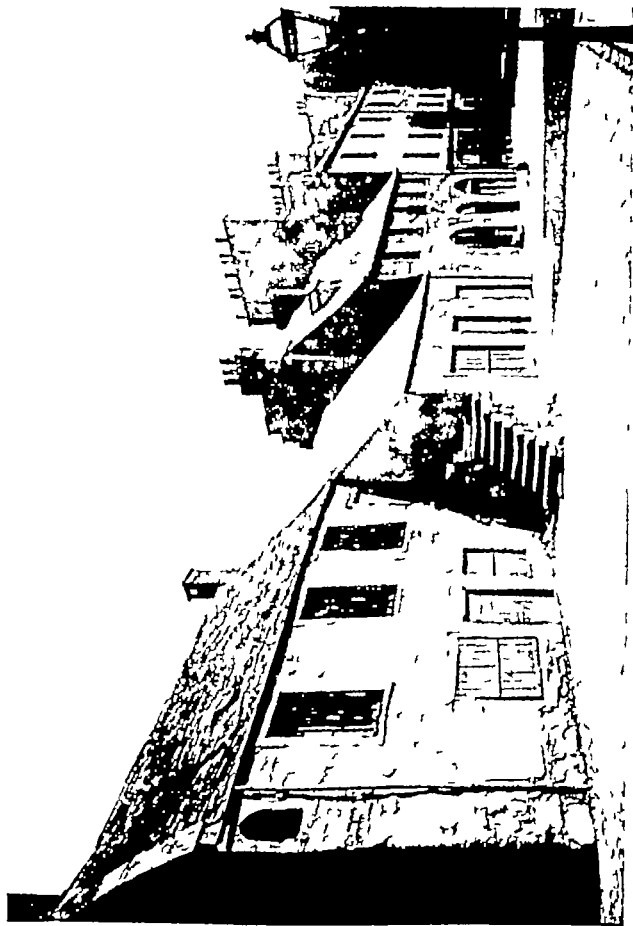
'I should know that voice,' said Simon Glover, who now came to the door with a dark lantern in his hand 'Son Smith, let this young man speak with me There is no danger in him, I promise you Stay but an instant where you are, and let no one enter the house, either to attack or defend I will be answerable that this galliard meant but some St Valentine's jest'

So saying, the old man pulled in the prisoner and shut the door, leaving Henry a little surprised at the unexpected light in which his father-in-law had viewed the affray 'A jest!' he said, 'it might have been a strange jest, if they had got into the maiden's sleeping-room! And they would have done so, had it not been for the honest friendly voice from betwixt the buttresses, which, if it were not that of the blessed saint—though what am I that the holy person should speak to me?—could not sound in that place without her permission and assent, and for which I will promise her a wax candle at her shrine, as long as my whinger, and I would I had had my two-handed broadsword instead, both for the sake of St Johnston and of the rogues, for of a certain those whingers are pretty toys, but more fit for a boy's hand than a man's Oh, my old two-handed Trojan, hadst thou been in my hands, as thou hang'st presently at the tester of my bed, the legs of those rogues had not carried their bodies so clean off the field But there come lighted torches and drawn swords So ho—stand! Are you for St Johnston? If friends to the bonny burgh, you are well come'

'We have been but bootless hunters,' said the townsmen. 'We followed by the tracks of the blood into the Dominican burial-ground, and we started two fellows from amongst the tombs, supporting betwixt them a third, who had probably got some of your marks about him, Harry They got to the postern gate before we could overtake them, and rang the sanctuary bell, the gate opened, and in went they So they are safe in girth and sanctuary, and we may go to our cold beds and warm us'

'Ay,' said one of the party, 'the good Dominicans have always some devout brother of their convent sitting up to open the gate of the sanctuary to any poor soul that is in trouble, and desires shelter in the church'

'Yes, if the poor hunted soul can pay for it,' said another;



HOUSE OF THE FAIR MAID " PERTH

From a recent photograph

'but, truly, if he be poor in purse as well as in spirit, he may stand on the outside till the hounds come up with him.'

A third, who had been poring for a few minutes upon the ground by advantage of his torch, now looked upwards and spoke. He was a brisk, forward, rather corpulent little man, called Oliver Proudfoote, reasonably wealthy, and a leading man in his craft, which was that of bonnet-makers, he, therefore, spoke as one in authority. 'Canst tell us, jolly smith'—for they recognised each other by the lights which were brought into the streets—'what manner of fellows they were who raised up this fray within burgh?'

'The two that I first saw,' answered the armourer, 'seemed to me, as well as I could observe them, to have Highland plaids about them.'

'Like enough—like enough,' answered another citizen, shaking his head. 'It's a shame the breaches in our walls are not repaired, and that these Landlouping Highland scoundrels are left at liberty to take honest men and women out of their beds any night that is dark enough.'

'But look here, neighbours,' said Oliver Proudfoote, showing a bloody hand which he had picked up from the ground, 'when did such a hand as this tie a Highlandman's brogues? It is large, indeed, and bony, but as fine as a lady's, with a ring that sparkles like a gleaming candle. Simon Glover has made gloves for this hand before now, if I am not much mistaken, for he works for all the courtiers.' The spectators here began to gaze on the bloody token with various comments.

'If that is the case,' said one, 'Harry Smith had best show a clean pair of heels for it, since the justiciar will scarce think the protecting a burgess's house an excuse for cutting off a gentleman's hand. There be hard laws against mutilation.'

'Fie upon you, that you will say so, Michael Wabster,' answered the bonnet-maker, 'are we not representatives and successors of the stout old Romans, who built Perth as like to their own city as they could? And have we not charters from all our noble kings and progenitors, as being their loving hegemmen? And would you have us now yield up our rights, privileges, and immunities, our outfang and infang, our hand-habend, our back-bearand, and our blood suits, and amerciaments, escheats, and commodities, and suffer an honest burgess's house to be assaulted without seeking for redress? No, brave citizens, craftsmen, and burgesses, the Tay shall flow back to Dunkeld before we submit to such injustice!'

‘And how can we help it?’ said a grave old man, who stood leaning on a two-handed sword. ‘What would you have us do?’

‘Marry, Bailie Craigdallie, I wonder that you, of all men, ask the question. I would have you pass like true men from this very place to the King’s Grace’s presence, raise him from his royal rest, and presenting to him the piteous case of our being called forth from our beds at this season, with little better covering than these shirts, I would show him this bloody token, and know from his Grace’s own royal lips whether it is just and honest that his loving lieges should be thus treated by the knights and nobles of his deboshed court. And this I call pushing our cause warmly.’

‘Warmly, sayst thou?’ replied the old burgess, ‘why, so warmly, that we shall all die of cold, man, before the porter turn a key to let us into the royal presence. Come, friends, the night is bitter, we have kept our watch and ward like men, and our jolly smith hath given a warning to those that would wrong us, which shall be worth twenty proclamations of the King. To-morrow is a new day, we will consult on this matter on this self-same spot, and consider what measures should be taken for discovery and pursuit of the villains. And therefore let us dismiss before the heart’s-blood freeze in our veins.’

‘Bravo — bravo, neighbour Craigdallie! St Johnston for ever!’

Oliver Proudfoot would still have spoken, for he was one of those pitiless orators who think that their eloquence can overcome all inconveniences in time, place, and circumstances. But no one would listen, and the citizens dispersed to their own houses by the light of the dawn, which began now to streak the horizon.

They were scarce gone ere the door of the glover’s house opened, and seizing the smith by the hand, the old man pulled him in.

‘Where is the prisoner?’ demanded the armourer.

‘He is gone — escaped — fled — what do I know of him?’ said the glover. ‘He got out at the back door, and so through the little garden. Think not of him, but come and see the Valentine whose honour and life you have saved this morning.’

‘Let me but sheathe my weapon,’ said the smith, ‘let me but wash my hands.’

‘There is not an instant to lose, she is up and almost

dressed. Come on, man. She shall see thee with thy good weapon in thy hand, and with villain's blood on thy fingers, that she may know what is the value of a true man's service. She has stopped my mouth over long with her pruderies and her scruples. I will have her know what a brave man's love is worth, and a bold burgess's to boot.'

CHAPTER V

Up ' lady fair, and braid thy hair,
And rouse thee in the breezy air,
Up ' quit thy bower, late wears the hour,
Long have the rooks caw'd round the tower

JOANNA BAILLIE.

STARTLED from her repose by the noise of the affray, the Fair Maid of Perth had listened in breathless terror to the sounds of violence and outcry which arose from the street. She had sunk on her knees to pray for assistance, and when she distinguished the voices of neighbours and friends collected for her protection, she remained in the same posture to return thanks. She was still kneeling when her father almost thrust her champion, Henry Smith, into her apartment; the bashful lover hanging back at first, as if afraid to give offence, and, on observing her posture, from respect to her devotion.

'Father,' said the armourer, 'she prays; I dare no more speak to her than to a bishop when he says mass'

'Now, go thy ways, for a right valiant and courageous blockhead,' said her father, and then speaking to his daughter, he added, 'Heaven is best thanked, my daughter, by gratitude shown to our fellow-creatures. Here comes the instrument by whom God has rescued thee from death, or perhaps from dishonour worse than death. Receive him, Catharine, as thy true Valentine, and him whom I desire to see my affectionate son.'

'Not thus — father,' replied Catharine 'I can see — can speak to no one now. I am not ungrateful — perhaps I am too thankful to the instrument of our safety, but let me thank the guardian saint who sent me this timely relief, and give me but a moment to don my kirtle.'

'Nay, God-a-mercy, wench, it were hard to deny thee time to busk thy body-clothes, since the request is the only words like a woman that thou hast uttered for these ten days. Truly, son Harry, I would my daughter would put off being entirely

a saint till the time comes for her being canonised for St. Catherine the Second.'

'Nay, jest not, father, for I will swear she has at least one sincere adorer already, who hath devoted himself to her pleasure, so far as sinful man may. Fare thee well, then, for the moment, fair maiden,' he concluded, raising his voice, 'and Heaven send thee dreams as peaceful as thy waking thoughts. I go to watch thy slumbers, and woe with him that shall intrude on them!'

'Nay, good and brave Henry, whose warm heart is at such variance with thy reckless hand, thrust thyself into no farther quarrels to night, but take the kindest thanks, and with these, try to assume the peaceful thoughts which you assign to me. To-morrow we will meet, that I may assure you of my gratitude. Farewell.'

'And farewell, lady and light of my heart!' said the armourer, and, descending the stair which led to Catharine's apartment, was about to sally forth into the street, when the glover caught him by the arm.

'I shall like the ruffle of to night,' said he, 'better than I ever thought to do the clashing of steel, if it brings my daughter to her senses, Harry, and teaches her what thou art worth. By St. Macgrider!¹ I even love these roysterers, and am sorry for that poor lover who will never wear left-handed chevron again. Ay! he has lost that which he will miss all the days of his life, especially when he goes to pull on his gloves, ay, he will pay but half a fee to my craft in future. Nay, not a step from this house to-night,' he continued. 'Thou dost not leave us, I promise thee, my son.'

'I do not mean it. But I will, with your permission, watch in the street. The attack may be renewed.'

'And if it be,' said Simon, 'thou wilt have better access to drive them back, having the vantage of the house. It is the way of fighting which suits us burghers best—that of resisting from behind stone walls. Our duty of watch and ward teaches us that trick, besides, enough are awake and astir to ensure us peace and quiet till morning. So come in this way.'

So saying, he drew Henry, nothing loth, into the same apartment where they had supped, and where the old woman, who was on foot, disturbed as others had been by the nocturnal affray, soon roused up the fire.

¹ A place called vulgarly Ecclesmagirdle (*Ecclesia Macgirdi*) not far from Perth, still preserves the memory of this old Gaelic saint from utter Lethe.

‘And now, my doughty son,’ said the glover, ‘what liquor wilt thou pledge thy father in?’

Henry Smith had suffered himself to sink mechanically upon a seat of old black oak, and now gazed on the fire, that flashed back a ruddy light over his manly features. He muttered to himself half audibly — ‘Good Henry — brave Henry. Ah! had she but said, *dear Henry!*’

‘What liquors be these?’ said the old glover, laughing. ‘My cellar holds none such, but if sack, or Rhenish, or wine of Gascony can serve, why, say the word and the flagon foams, that is all.’

‘The *kindest* thanks,’ said the armourer, still musing, ‘that’s more than she ever said to me before — the *kindest* thanks — what may not that stretch to?’

‘It shall stretch like kid’s leather, man,’ said the glover, ‘if thou wilt but be ruled, and say what thou wilt take for thy morning’s draught.’

‘Whatever thou wilt, father,’ answered the armourer, carelessly, and relapsed into the analysis of Catharine’s speech to him. ‘She spoke of my warm heart, but she also spoke of my reckless hand. What earthly thing can I do to get rid of this fighting fancy? Certainly I were best strike my right hand off, and nail it to the door of a church, that it may never do me discredit more.’

‘You have chopped off hands enough for one night,’ said his friend, setting a flagon of wine on the table. ‘Why dost thou vex thyself, man? She would love thee twice as well did she not see how thou doatest upon her. But it becomes serious now. I am not to have the risk of my booth being broken and my house plundered by the hell-raking followers of the nobles, because she is called the Fair Maid of Perth, an’t please ye. No, she shall know I am her father, and will have that obedience to which law and gospel give me right. I will have her thy wife, Henry, my heart of gold — thy wife, my man of mettle, and that before many weeks are over. Come — come, here is to thy merry bridal, jolly smith.’

The father quaffed a large cup, and filled it to his adopted son, who raised it slowly to his head, then, ere it had reached his lips, replaced it suddenly on the table and shook his head.

‘Nay, if thou wilt not pledge me to such a health, I know no one who will,’ said Simon. ‘What canst thou mean, thou foolish lad? Here has a chance happened, which in a manner places her in thy power, since from one end of the city to the

other all would cry fie on her if she should say thee nay Here am I, her father, not only consenting to the cutting out of the match, but willing to see you two as closely united together as ever needle stitched buckskin. And with all this on thy side — fortune, father, and all — thou lookest like a distracted lover in a ballad, more like to pitch thyself into the 'Tay than to woo a lass that may be had for the asking, if you can but choose the lucky minute.'

'Ay, but that lucky minute, father! I question much if Catharine ever has such a moment to glance on earth and its inhabitants as might lead her to listen to a coarse ignorant borrel man like me. I cannot tell how it is, father, elsewhere I can hold up my head like another man, but with your saintly daughter I lose heart and courage, and I cannot help thinking that it would be wellnigh robbing a holy shrine if I could succeed in surprising her affections. Her thoughts are too much fitted for Heaven to be wasted on such a one as I am.'

'E'en as you like, Henry,' answered the glover 'My daughter is not courting you any more than I am — a fair offer is no cause of feud, only if you think that I will give in to her foolish notions of a convent, take it with you that I will never listen to them. I love and honour the church,' he said, crossing himself 'I pay her rights duly and cheerfully — tithes and alms, wine and wax, I pay them as justly, I say, as any man in Perth of my means doth — but I cannot afford the church my only and single ewe lamb that I have in the world. Her mother was dear to me on earth, and is now an angel in Heaven. Catharine is all I have to remind me of her I have lost, and if she goes to the cloister, it shall be when these old eyes are closed for ever, and not sooner. But as for you, friend Gow, I pray you will act according to your own best liking. I want to force no wife on you, I promise you.'

'Nay, now, you beat the iron twice over,' said Henry 'It is thus we always end, father, by your being testy with me for not doing that thing in the world which would make me happiest, were I to have it in my power. Why, father, I would the keenest dirk I ever forged were sticking in my heart at this moment if there is one single particle in it that is not more your daughter's property than my own. But what can I do? I cannot think less of her, or more of myself, than we both deserve, and what seems to you so easy and certain is to me as difficult as it would be to work a steel hauberk out of hards of flax. But here is to you, father,' he added, in a more cheerful tone, 'and

here is to my fair saint and Valentine, as I hope your Catharine will be mine for the season. And let me not keep your old head longer from the pillow, but make interest with your feather-bed till daybreak, and then you must be my guide to your daughter's chamber-door, and my apology for entering it, to bid her good-morrow, for the brightest that the sun will awaken in the city or for miles round it.'

'No bad advice, my son,' said the honest glover 'But you, what will you do? Will you lie down beside me, or take a part of Conachar's bed?'

'Neither,' answered Harry Gow, 'I should but prevent your rest, and for me this easy-chair is worth a down bed, and I will sleep like a sentinel, with my graith about me' As he spoke, he laid his hand on his sword.

'Nay, Heaven send us no more need of weapons Good-night, or rather good-morrow, till day-peep, and the first who wakes calls up the other'

Thus parted the two burghers The glover retired to his bed, and, it is to be supposed, to rest The lover was not so fortunate His bodily frame easily bore the fatigue which he had encountered in the course of the night, but his mind was of a different and more delicate mould In one point of view, he was but the stout burgher of his period, proud alike of his art in making weapons and wielding them when made, his professional jealousy, personal strength, and skill in the use of arms brought him into many quarrels, which had made him generally feared, and in some instances disliked But with these qualities were united the simple good-nature of a child, and at the same time an imaginative and enthusiastic temper, which seemed little to correspond with his labours at the forge or his combats in the field Perhaps a little of the hare-brained and ardent feeling which he had picked out of old ballads, or from the metrical romances, which were his sole source of information or knowledge, may have been the means of pricking him on to some of his achievements, which had often a rude strain of chivalry in them, at least, it was certain that his love to the fair Catharine had in it a delicacy such as might have become the squire of low degree, who was honoured, if song speaks truth, with the smiles of the King of Hungary's daughter His sentiments towards her were certainly as exalted as if they had been fixed upon an actual angel, which made old Simon, and others who watched his conduct, think that his passion was too high and devotional to be successful

with maiden of mortal mould. They were mistaken, however Catharine, coy and reserved as she was, had a heart which could feel and understand the nature and depth of the armourer's passion, and whether she was able to repay it or not, she had as much secret pride in the attachment of the redoubted Henry Gow as a lady of romance may be supposed to have in the company of a tame lion, who follows to provide for and defend her. It was with sentiments of the most sincere gratitude that she recollected, as she awoke at dawn, the services of Henry during the course of the eventful night, and the first thought which she dwelt upon was the means of making him understand her feelings.

Arising hastily from bed, and half blushing at her own purpose — 'I have been cold to him, and perhaps unjust, I will not be ungrateful,' she said to herself, 'though I cannot yield to his suit. I will not wait till my father compels me to receive him as my Valentine for the year. I will seek him out, and choose him myself. I have thought other girls bold when they did something like this, but I shall thus best please my father, and but discharge the rites due to good St. Valentine by showing my gratitude to this brave man.'

Hastily slipping on her dress, which, nevertheless, was left a good deal more disordered than usual, she tripped downstairs and opened the door of the chamber, in which, as she had guessed, her lover had passed the hours after the fray. Catharine paused at the door, and became half afraid of executing her purpose, which not only permitted but enjoined the Valentines of the year to begin their connexion with a kiss of affection. It was looked upon as a peculiarly propitious omen if the one party could find the other asleep, and awaken him or her by performance of this interesting ceremony.

Never was a fairer opportunity offered for commencing this mystic tie than that which now presented itself to Catharine. After many and various thoughts, sleep had at length overcome the stout armourer in the chair in which he had deposited himself. His features, in repose, had a more firm and manly cast than Catharine had thought, who, having generally seen them fluctuating between shamefacedness and apprehension of her displeasure, had been used to connect with them some idea of imbecility.

'He looks very stern,' she said, 'if he should be angry? And then when he awakes — we are alone — if I should call Dorothy — if I should wake my father? But no! it is a thing of

custom, and done in all maidenly and sisterly love and honour I will not suppose that Henry can misconstrue it, and I will not let a childish bashfulness put my gratitude to sleep'

So saying, she tripped along the floor of the apartment with a light, though hesitating, step, and a cheek crimsoned at her own purpose, and gliding to the cham of the sleeper, dropped a kiss upon his lips as light as if a rose-leaf had fallen on them. The slumbers must have been slight which such a touch could dispel, and the dreams of the sleeper must needs have been connected with the cause of the interruption, since Henry, instantly starting up, caught the maiden in his arms, and attempted to return in ecstasy the salute which had broken his repose. But Catharine struggled in his embrace, and as her efforts implied alarmed modesty rather than maidenly coyness, her bashful lover suffered her to escape a grasp from which twenty times her strength could not have extricated her.

'Nay, be not angry, good Henry,' said Catharine, in the kindest tone, to her surprised lover. 'I have paid my vows to St Valentine, to show how I value the mate which he has sent me for the year. Let but my father be present, and I will not dare to refuse thee the revenge you may claim for a broken sleep.'

'Let not that be a hinderance,' said the old glover, rushing in ecstasy into the room, 'to her, smith — to her! strike while the iron is hot, and teach her what it is not to let sleeping dogs lie still.'

Thus encouraged, Henry, though perhaps with less alarming vivacity, again seized the blushing maiden in his arms, who submitted with a tolerable grace to receive repayment of her salute, a dozen times repeated, and with an energy very different from that which had provoked such severe retaliation. At length she again extricated herself from her lover's arms, and, as if frightened and repenting what she had done, threw herself into a seat, and covered her face with her hands.

'Cheer up, thou silly girl,' said her father, 'and be not ashamed that thou hast made the two happiest men in Perth, since thy old father is one of them. Never was kiss so well bestowed, and meet it is that it should be suitably returned. Look up, my darling! look up, and let me see thee give but one smile. By my honest word, the sun that now rises over our fair city shows no sight that can give me greater pleasure. What,' he continued, in a jocose tone, 'thou thoughtst thou

hadst Jamie Keddie's ring,¹ and couldst walk invisible? but not so, my fairy of the dawning. Just as I was about to rise, I heard thy chamber door open, and watched thee downstairs, not to protect thee against this sleepy-headed Henry, but to see with my own delighted eyes my beloved girl do that which her father most wished. Come, put down these foolish hands, and though thou blushest a little, it will only the better grace St. Valentine's morn, when blushes best become a maiden's cheek.'

As Simon Glover spoke, he pulled away, with gentle violence, the hands which hid his daughter's face. She blushed deeply indeed, but there was more than maiden's shame in her face, and her eyes were fast filling with tears.

'What! weeping, love?' continued her father, 'nay — nay, this is more than need. Henry, help me to comfort this little fool.'

Catharine made an effort to collect herself and to smile, but the smile was of a melancholy and serious cast.

'I only meant to say, father,' said the Fair Maid of Perth, with continued exertion, 'that in choosing Henry Gow for my Valentine, and rendering to him the rights and greeting of the morning, according to wonted custom, I meant but to show my gratitude to him for his manly and faithful service, and my obedience to you. But do not lead him to think — and, oh, dearest father, do not yourself entertain an idea — that I meant more than what the promise to be his faithful and affectionate Valentine through the year requires of me.'

'Ay — ay — ay — ay, we understand it all,' said Simon, in the soothing tone which nurses apply to children. 'We understand what the meaning is, enough for once — enough for once. Thou shalt not be frightened or hurried. Loving, true, and faithful Valentines are ye, and the rest as Heaven and opportunity shall permit. Come, prithee, have done wring not thy tiny hands, nor fear farther persecution now. Thou hast done bravely, excellently. And now, away to Dorothy, and call up the old sluggard, we must have a substantial breakfast, after a night of confusion and a morning of joy, and thy hand will be needed to prepare for us some of these delicate cakes which no one can make but thyself, and well hast thou a right to the secret, seeing who taught it thee. Ah! health to the soul of thy dearest mother,' he added, with a sigh, 'how blythe would she have been to see this happy St. Valentine's morning!'

¹ See Note 16
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Catharine took the opportunity of escape which was thus given her, and glided from the room. To Henry it seemed as if the sun had disappeared from the heaven at mid-day, and left the world in sudden obscurity. Even the high-swelled hopes with which the late incident had filled him began to quail, as he reflected upon her altered demeanour — the tears in her eyes, the obvious fear which occupied her features, and the pains she had taken to show, as plainly as delicacy would permit, that the advances which she had made to him were limited to the character with which the rites of the day had invested him. Her father looked on his fallen countenance with something like surprise and displeasure.

‘In the name of good St John, what has befallen you, that makes you look as grave as an owl, when a lad of your spirit, having really such a fancy for this poor girl as you pretend, ought to be as lively as a lark?’

‘Alas, father!’ replied the crestfallen lover, ‘there is that written on her brow which says she loves me well enough to be my Valentine, especially since you wish it, but not well enough to be my wife.’

‘Now, a plague on thee for a cold, down-hearted gooscap,’ answered the father. ‘I can read a woman’s brow as well, and better, than thou, and I can see no such matter on hers. What, the foul fiend, man! there thou wast lying like a lord in thy elbow-chair, as sound asleep as a judge, when, hadst thou been a lover of any spirit, thou wouldst have been watching the east for the first ray of the sun. But there thou layest, snoring I warrant, thinking nought about her, or anything else, and the poor girl rises at peep of day, lest any one else should pick up her most precious and vigilant Valentine, and wakes thee with a grace which — so help me, St Macgrider! — would have put life in an anvil, and thou awakest to hone, and pine, and moan, as if she had drawn a hot iron across thy lips! I would to St John she had sent old Dorothy on the errand, and bound thee for thy Valentine service to that bundle of dry bones, with never a tooth in her head. She were fittest Valentine in Perth for so craven a wooer.’

‘As to craven, father,’ answered the smith, ‘there are twenty good cocks, whose combs I have plucked, can tell thee if I am craven or no. And Heaven knows that I would give my good land, held by burgess’ tenure, with smithy, bellows, tongs, anvil, and all, providing it would make your view of the matter the true one. But it is not of her coyness or her blushes that

I speak, it is of the paleness which so soon followed the red, and chased it from her cheeks, and it is of the tears which succeeded. It was like the April shower stealing upon and obscuring the fairest dawning that ever beamed over the Tay.

'Tutti tatti,' replied the glover, 'neither Rome nor Perth were built in a day. Thou hast fished salmon a thousand times, and mightst have taken a lesson. When the fish has taken the fly, to pull a hard strain on the line would snap the tackle to pieces, were it made of wire. Ease your hand, man, and let him rise, take leisure, and in half an hour thou layest him on the bank. There is a beginning as fair as you could wish, unless you expect the poor wench to come to thy bedside as she did to thy chair, and that is not the fashion of modest maidens. But observe me, after we have had our breakfast, I will take care thou hast an opportunity to speak thy mind, only beware thou be neither too backward nor press her too hard. Give her line enough, but do not slack too fast, and my life for yours upon the issue.'

'Do what I can, father,' answered Henry, 'you will always lay the blame on me — either that I give too much head or that I strain the tackle. I would give the best habergeon I ever wrought, that the difficulty in truth rested with me, for there were then the better chance of its being removed. I own, however, I am but an ass in the trick of bringing about such discourse as is to the purpose for the occasion.'

'Come into the booth with me, my son, and I will furnish thee with a fitting theme. Thou knowest the maiden who ventures to kiss a sleeping man wins of him a pair of gloves. Come to my booth, thou shalt have a pair of delicate kid-skin that will exactly suit her hand and arm. I was thinking of her poor mother when I shaped them,' added honest Simon, with a sigh, 'and except Catharine, I know not the woman in Scotland whom they would fit, though I have measured most of the high beauties of the court. Come with me, I say, and thou shalt be provided with a theme to wag thy tongue upon, providing thou hast courage and caution to stand by thee in thy wooing.'

CHAPTER VI

Never to man shall Catharine give her hand.

Taming of the Shrew

THE breakfast was served, and the thin soft cakes, made of flour and honey according to the family receipt, were not only commended with all the partiality of a father and a lover, but done liberal justice to in the mode which is best proof of cake as well as pudding. They talked, jested, and laughed. Catharine, too, had recovered her equanimity where the dames and damsels of the period were apt to lose theirs — in the kitchen, namely, and in the superintendence of household affairs, in which she was an adept. I question much if the perusal of Seneca for as long a period would have had equal effect in composing her mind.

Old Dorothy sat down at the board-end, as was the home-spun fashion of the period, and so much were the two men amused with their own conversation, and Catharine occupied either in attending to them or with her own reflections, that the old woman was the first who observed the absence of the boy Conachar.

‘It is true,’ said the master glover, ‘go call him, the idle Highland loon. He was not seen last night during the fray neither, at least I saw him not. Did any of you observe him?’

The reply was negative, and Henry’s observation followed —

‘There are times when Highlanders can couch like their own deer — ay, and run from danger too as fast. I have seen them do so myself, for the matter of that.’

‘And there are times,’ replied Simon, ‘when King Arthur and his Round Table could not make stand against them. I wish, Henry, you would speak more reverently of the Highlanders. They are often in Perth, both alone and in numbers, and you ought to keep peace with them so long as they will keep peace with you.’

An answer of defiance rose to Henry's lips, but he prudently suppressed it. 'Why, thou knowest, father,' he said, smiling, 'that we handicrafts best love the folks we live by, now, my craft provides for valiant and noble knights, gentle squires and pages, stout men at-arms, and others that wear the weapons which we make. It is natural I should like the Ruthvens, the Lindsays, the Ogilvys, the Oliphants, and so many others of our brave and noble neighbours, who are sheathed in steel of my making, like so many paladins, better than those naked, snatching mountaineers, who are ever doing us wrong, especially since no five of each clan have a rusty shirt of mail as old as their *brattach*, and that is but the work of the clumsy clan smith after all, who is no member of our honourable mystery, but simply works at the anvil, where his father wrought before him. I say, such people can have no favour in the eyes of an honest craftsman.'

'Well — well,' answered Simon, 'I prithee let the matter rest even now, for here comes the loitering boy, and, though it is a holyday morn, I want no more bloody puddings.'

The youth entered accordingly. His face was pale, his eyes red, and there was an air of discomposure about his whole person. He sat down at the lower end of the table, opposite to Dorothy, and crossed himself, as if preparing for his morning's meal. As he did not help himself to any food, Catharine offered him a platter containing some of the cakes which had met with such general approbation. At first he rejected her offered kindness rather sullenly, but on her repeating the offer with a smile of good-will, he took a cake in his hand, broke it, and was about to eat a morsel, when the effort to swallow seemed almost too much for him, and though he succeeded, he did not repeat it.

'You have a bad appetite for St. Valentine's morning, Con-achar,' said his good-humoured master, 'and yet I think you must have slept soundly the night before, since I conclude you were not disturbed by the noise of the scuffle. Why, I thought a lively glune amie would have been at his master's side, dirk in hand, at the first sound of danger which arose within a mile of us.'

'I heard but an indistinct noise,' said the youth, his face glowing suddenly like a heated coal, 'which I took for the shout of some merry revellers, and you are wont to bid me never open door or window, or alarm the house, on the score of such folly.'

'Well — well,' said Simon, 'I thought a Highlander would

have known better the difference betwixt the clash of swords and the twanging on harps, the wild war-cry and the merry hunt's up. But let it pass, boy, I am glad thou art losing thy quarrelsome fashions. Eat thy breakfast, any way, as I have that to employ thee which requires haste.

'I have breakfasted aheady, and am in haste myself. I am for the hills. Have you any message to my father?'

'None,' replied the glover, in some surprise, 'but art thou beside thyself, boy? or what a vengeance takes thee from the city, like the wing of the whirlwind?'

'My warning has been sudden,' said Conachar, speaking with difficulty, but whether arising from the hesitation incidental to the use of a foreign language, or whether from some other cause, could not easily be distinguished. 'There is to be a meeting—a great hunting——' Here he stopped.

'And when are you to return from this blessed hunting?' said his master, 'that is, if I may make so bold as to ask.'

'I cannot exactly answer,' replied the apprentice. 'Perhaps never, if such be my father's pleasure,' continued Conachar, with assumed indifference.

'I thought,' said Simon Glover, rather seriously, 'that all this was to be laid aside, when at earnest intercession I took you under my roof. I thought that when I undertook, being very loth to do so, to teach you an honest trade, we were to hear no more of hunting, or hosting, or clan-gatherings, or any matters of the kind?'

'I was not consulted when I was sent hither,' said the lad, haughtily. 'I cannot tell what the terms were.'

'But I can tell you, sir Conachar,' said the glover, angrily, 'that there is no fashion of honesty in binding yourself to an honest craftsman, and spoiling more hides than your own is worth, and now, when you are of age to be of some service, in taking up the disposal of your time at your pleasure, as if it were your own property, not your master's.'

'Reckon with my father about that,' answered Conachar, 'he will pay you gallantly—a French mutton for every hide I have spoiled, and a fat cow or bullock for each day I have been absent.'

'Close with him, friend Glover—close with him,' said the armourer, drily. 'Thou wilt be paid gallantly at least, if not honestly. Methinks I would like to know how many purses have been emptied to fill the goat-skin sporran¹ that is to be so free to you of its gold, and whose pastures the bullocks have

¹ See Note 17

been calved in that are to be sent down to you from the Grampian passes.'

'You remind me, friend,' said the Highland youth, turning haughtily towards the smith, 'that I have also a reckoning to hold with you.'

'Keep at arm's length, then,' said Henry, extending his brawny arm 'I will have no more close hugs—no more bodkin work, like last night. I care little for a wasp's sting, yet I will not allow the insect to come near me if I have warning.'

Conachar smiled contemptuously 'I meant thee no harm,' he said. 'My father's son did thee but too much honour to spill such churl's blood. I will pay you for it by the drop, that it may be dried up, and no longer soil my fingers.'

'Peace, thou bragging ape!' said the smith 'the blood of a true man cannot be valued in gold. The only expiation would be that thou shouldst come a mile into the Low Country with two of the strongest galloglasses of thy clan, and while I dealt with them, I would leave thee to the correction of my apprentice, little Jankin.'

Here Catharine interposed. 'Peace,' she said, 'my trusty Valentine, whom I have a right to command, and peace you, Conachar, who ought to obey me as your master's daughter. It is ill done to awaken again on the morrow the evil which has been laid to sleep at night.'

'Farewell, then, master,' said Conachar, after another look of scorn at the smith, which he only answered with a laugh—'farewell! and I thank you for your kindness, which has been more than I deserved. If I have at times seemed less than thankful, it was the fault of circumstances, and not of my will. Catharine——' He cast upon the maiden a look of strong emotion, in which various feelings were blended. He hesitated, as if to say something, and at length turned away with the single word 'farewell.' Five minutes afterwards, with Highland buskins on his feet and a small bundle in his hand, he passed through the north gate of Perth, and directed his course to the Highlands.

'There goes enough of beggary and of pride for a whole Highland clan,' said Henry 'He talks as familiarly of gold pieces as I would of silver pennies, and yet I will be sworn that the thumb of his mother's worsted glove might hold the treasure of the whole clan.'

'Luke enough,' said the glover, laughing at the idea, 'his

mother was a large-boned woman, especially in the fingers and wrist'

'And as for cattle,' continued Henry, 'I reckon his father and brothers steal sheep by one at a time'

'The less we say of them the better,' said the glover, becoming again grave 'Brothers he hath none, his father is a powerful man — hath long hands — reaches as far as he can, and hears farther than it is necessary to talk of him.'

'And yet he hath bound his only son apprentice to a glover in Perth?' said Henry 'Why, I should have thought the gentle craft, as it is called, of St Crispin would have suited him best, and that, if the son of some great Mac or O was to become an artisan, it could only be in the craft where princes set him the example'

This remark, though ironical, seemed to awaken our friend Simon's sense of professional dignity, which was a prevailing feeling that marked the manners of the artisans of the time.

'You err, son Henry,' he replied, with much gravity 'the glovers¹ are the more honourable craft of the two, in regard they provide for the accommodation of the hands, whereas the shoemakers and cordwainers do but work for the feet.'

'Both equally necessary members of the body corporate,' said Henry, whose father had been a cordwainer

'It may be so, my son,' said the glover, 'but not both alike honourable Bethink you, that we employ the hands as pledges of friendship and good faith, and the feet have no such privilege. Brave men fight with their hands, cowards employ their feet in flight A glove is borne aloft, a shoe is trampled in the mire A man greets a friend with his open hand; he spurns a dog, or one whom he holds as mean as a dog, with his advanced foot A glove on the point of a spear is a sign and pledge of faith all the wide world over, as a gauntlet flung down is a gage of knightly battle, while I know no other emblem belonging to an old shoe, except that some crones will fling them after a man by way of good luck, in which practice I avow myself to entertain no confidence'

'Nay,' said the smith, amused with his friend's eloquent pleading for the dignity of the art he practised, 'I am not the man, I promise you, to disparage the glover's mystery Bethink you, I am myself a maker of gauntlets But the dignity of your ancient craft removes not my wonder, that the father of this Conachar suffered his son to learn a trade of any kind from

¹ See Note 18

a Lowland craftsman, holding us, as they do, altogether beneath their magnificent degree, and a race of contemptible drudges, unworthy of any other fate than to be ill-used and plundered, as often as these bare breeched dunmewassals see safety and convenience for doing so'

'Ay,' answered the glover, 'but there were powerful reasons for — for ——' he withheld something which seemed upon his lips, and went on — 'for Conachar's father acting as he did. Well, I have played fair with him, and I do not doubt but he will act honourably by me. But Conachar's sudden leave taking has put me to some inconvenience. He had things under his charge. I must look through the booth.'

'Can I help you, father?' said Henry Gow, deceived by the earnestness of his manner

'You! — no,' said Simon, with a dryness which made Henry so sensible of the simplicity of his proposal, that he blushed to the eyes at his own dulness of comprehension, in a matter where love ought to have induced him to take his cue easily up. 'You, Catharine,' said the glover, as he left the room, 'entertain your Valentine for five minutes, and see he departs not till my return. Come hither with me, old Dorothy, and bestir thy limbs in my behalf.'

He left the room, followed by the old woman, and Henry Smith remained with Catharine, almost for the first time in his life, entirely alone. There was embarrassment on the maiden's part, and awkwardness on that of the lover, for about a minute, when Henry, calling up his courage, pulled the gloves out of his pocket with which Simon had supplied him, and asked her to permit one who had been so highly graced that morning to pay the usual penalty for being asleep at the moment when he would have given the slumbers of a whole twelvemonth to be awake for a single minute.

'Nay, but,' said Catharine, 'the fulfilment of my homage to St. Valentine infers no such penalty as you desire to pay, and I cannot therefore think of accepting them.'

'These gloves,' said Henry, advancing his seat insidiously towards Catharine as he spoke, 'were wrought by the hands that are dearest to you, and see — they are shaped for your own.' He extended them as he spoke, and taking her arm in his robust hand, spread the gloves beside it to show how well they fitted. 'Look at that taper arm,' he said, 'look at these small fingers, think who sewed these seams of silk and gold, and think whether the glove and the arm which alone the

glove can fit ought to remain separate, because the poor glove has had the misfortune to be for a passing minute in the keeping of a hand so swart and ough as mine'

'They are welcome as coming from my father,' said Catharine; 'and surely not less so as coming from my *friend* (and there was an emphasis on the word), as well as my Valentine and preserver'

'Let me aid to do them on,' said the smith, bringing himself yet closer to her side, 'they may seem a little over-tight at first, and you may require some assistance'

'You are skilful in such service, good Henry Gow,' said the maiden, smiling, but at the same time drawing farther from her lover

'In good faith, no,' said Henry, shaking his head 'my experience has been in donning steel gauntlets on mailed knights, more than in fitting embroidered gloves upon maidens.'

'I will trouble you then no further, and Dorothy shall aid me, though there needs no assistance, my father's eye and fingers are faithful to his craft what work he puts through his hands is always true to the measure.'

'Let me be convinced of it,' said the smith — 'let me see that these slender gloves actually match the hands they were made for'

'Some other time, good Henry,' answered the maiden, 'I will wear the gloves in honour of St Valentine, and the mate he has sent me for the season I would to Heaven I could pleasure my father as well in weightier matters at present the perfume of the leather harms the headache I have had since morning'

'Headache, dearest maiden' echoed her lover

'If you call it heartache, you will not misname it,' said Catharine, with a sigh, and proceeded to speak in a very serious tone 'Henry,' she said, 'I am going perhaps to be as bold as I gave you reason to think me this morning, for I am about to speak the first upon a subject on which, it may well be, I ought to wait till I had to answer you But I cannot, after what has happened this morning, suffer my feelings towards you to remain unexplained, without the possibility of my being greatly misconceived. Nay, do not answer till you have heard me out You are brave, Henry, beyond most men, honest and true as the steel you work upon —'

'Stop — stop, Catharine, for mercy's sake' You never said so much that was good concerning me, save to introduce some

bitter censure, of which your praises were the harbingers I am honest, and so forth, you would say, but a hot-brained brawler, and common sworder or stabber'

'I should injure both myself and you in calling you such. No, Henry, to no common stabber, had he worn a plume in his bonnet and gold spurs on his heels, would Catharine Glover have offered the little grace she has this day voluntarily done to you. If I have at times dwelt severely upon the proneness of your spirit to anger, and of your hand to strife, it is because I would have you, if I could so persuade you, hate in yourself the sins of vanity and wrath by which you are most easily beset. I have spoken on the topic more to alarm your own conscience than to express my opinion. I know as well as my father that, in these forlorn and desperate days, the whole customs of our nation, nay, of every Christian nation, may be quoted in favour of bloody quarrels for trifling causes, of the taking deadly and deep revenge for slight offences, and the slaughter of each other for emulation of honour, or often in mere sport. But I know that for all these things we shall one day be called into judgment, and fain would I convince thee, my brave and generous friend, to listen oftener to the dictates of thy good heart, and take less pride in the strength and dexterity of thy unsparing arm'

'I am — I am convinced, Catharine,' exclaimed Henry 'thy words shall henceforward be a law to me. I have done enough, far too much, indeed, for proof of my bodily strength and courage, but it is only from you, Catharine, that I can learn a better way of thinking. Remember, my fair Valentine, that my ambition of distinction in arms, and my love of strife, if it can be called such, do not fight even handed with my reason and my milder dispositions, but have their patrons and sticklers to egg them on. Is there a quarrel, and suppose that I, thinking on your counsels, am something loth to engage in it, believe you I am left to decide between peace or war at my own choosing? Not so, by St. Mary! there are a hundred round me to stir me on. "Why, how now, Smith, is thy main-spring rusted?" says one. "Jolly Henry is deaf on the quarrelling ear this morning," says another. "Stand to it, for the honour of Perth," says my Lord the Provost. "Harry against them for a gold noble," cries your father, perhaps. Now, what can a poor fellow do, Catharine, when all are hallooing him on in the devil's name, and not a soul putting in a word on the other side?

'Nay, I know the devil has factors enough to utter his wares,' said Catharine, 'but it is our duty to despise such idle arguments, though they may be pleaded even by those to whom we owe much love and honour'

'Then there are the minstrels, with their romaunts and ballads, which place all a man's praise in receiving and repaying hard blows. It is sad to tell, Catharine, how many of my sins that Blind Harry the Minstrel¹ hath to answer for. When I hit a downright blow, it is not — so save me, St John! — to do any man injury, but only to strike as William Wallace struck.'

The minstrel's namesake spoke this in such a tone of rueful seriousness, that Catharine could scarce forbear smiling, but nevertheless she assured him that the danger of his own and other men's lives ought not for a moment to be weighed against such simple toys.

'Ay, but,' replied Henry, emboldened by her smiles, 'methinks now the good cause of peace would thrive all the better for an advocate. Suppose, for example, that, when I am pressed and urged to lay hand on my weapon, I could have cause to recollect that there was a gentle and guardian angel at home, whose image would seem to whisper, "Henry, do no violence; it is my hand which you crimson with blood. Henry, rush upon no idle danger, it is my breast which you expose to injury"; such thoughts would do more to restrain my mood than if every monk in Perth should cry, "Hold thy hand, on pain of bell, book, and candle"'

'If such a warning as could be given by the voice of sisterly affection can have weight in the debate,' said Catharine, 'do think that, in striking, you empurple this hand, that in receiving wounds you harm this heart'

The smith took courage at the sincerely affectionate tone in which these words were delivered

'And wherefore not stretch your regard a degree beyond these cold limits? Why, since you are so kind and generous as to own some interest in the poor ignorant sinner before you, should you not at once adopt him as your scholar and your husband? Your father desires it, the town expects it, glovers and smiths are preparing their rejoicings, and you, only you, whose words are so fair and so kind, you will not give your consent'

¹ The reader need hardly be informed that this is an obvious anachronism, the Blind Minstrel having flourished a century later than the time of this narrative (*Laing*)

'Henry,' said Catharine, in a low and tremulous voice, 'believe me I should hold it my duty to comply with my father's commands, were there not obstacles invincible to the match which he proposes.'

'Yet think — think but for a moment. I have little to say for myself in comparison of you, who can both read and write. But then I wish to hear reading, and could listen to your sweet voice for ever. You love music, and I have been taught to play and sing as well as some minstrels. You love to be charitable, I have enough to give, and enough to keep as large a daily alms as a deacon gives would never be missed by me. Your father gets old for daily toil, he would live with us, as I should truly hold him for my father also. I would be as chary of mixing in causeless strife as of thrusting my hand into my own furnace, and if there came on us unlawful violence, its wares would be brought to an ill chosen market.'

'May you experience all the domestic happiness which you can conceive, Henry, but with some one more happy than I am!' So spoke, or rather so sobbed, the Fair Maiden of Perth, who seemed choking in the attempt to restrain her tears.

'You hate me, then?' said the lover, after a pause.

'Heaven is my witness, no.'

'Or you love some other better?'

'It is cruel to ask what it cannot avail you to know. But you are entirely mistaken.'

'You wildcat, Conachar, perhaps?' said Henry. 'I have marked his looks —'

'You avail yourself of this painful situation to insult me, Henry, though I have little deserved it. Conachar is nothing to me, more than the trying to tame his wild spirit by instruction might lead me to take some interest in a mind abandoned to prejudices and passions, and therein, Henry, not unlike your own.'

'It must then be some of these flaunting silk-worm sirs about the court,' said the armourer, his natural heat of temper kindling from disappointment and vexation — 'some of those who think they carry it off through the height of their plumed bonnets and the jingle of their spurs. I would I knew which it was that, leaving his natural mates, the painted and perfumed dames of the court, comes to take his prey among the simple maidens of the burgher craft. I would I knew but his name and surname!'

'Henry Smith,' said Catharine, shaking off the weakness

which seemed to threaten to overpower her a moment before, 'this is the language of an ungrateful fool, or rather of a frantic madman. I have told you already, there was no one who stood, at the beginning of this conference, more high in my opinion than he who is now losing ground with every word he utters in the tone of unjust suspicion and senseless anger. You had no title to know even what I have told you, which, I pray you to observe, implies no preference to you over others, though it disowns any preference of another to you. It is enough you should be aware that there is as insuperable an objection to what you desire as if an enchanter had a spell over my destiny.'

'Spells may be broken by true men,' said the smith. 'I would it were come to that. Thorbiorn, the Danish armourer, spoke of a spell he had for making breastplates, by singing a certain song while the iron was heating. I told him that his runic rhymes were no proof against the weapons which fought at Loncarty — what farther came of it it is needless to tell, but the corslet and the wearer, and the leech who salved his wound, know if Henry Gow can break a spell or no.'

Catharine looked at him as if about to return an answer little approving of the exploit he had vaunted, which the down-right smith had not recollected was of a kind that exposed him to her frequent censure. But ere she had given words to her thoughts, her father thrust his head in at the door.

'Henry,' he said, 'I must interrupt your more pleasing affairs, and request you to come into my working-room in all speed, to consult about certain matters deeply affecting the weal of the burgh.'

Henry, making his obeisance to Catharine, left the apartment upon her father's summons. Indeed, it was probably in favour of their future friendly intercourse that they were parted on this occasion at the turn which the conversation seemed likely to take. For, as the wooer had begun to hold the refusal of the damsel as somewhat capricious and inexplicable after the degree of encouragement which, in his opinion, she had afforded, Catharine, on the other hand, considered him rather as an encroacher upon the grace which she had shown him than one whose delicacy rendered him deserving of such favour. But there was living in their bosoms towards each other a reciprocal kindness, which, on the termination of the dispute, was sure to revive, inducing the maiden to forget her offended delicacy, and the lover his slighted warmth of passion.

CHAPTER VII

This quarrel may draw blood another day

Henry IV Part I

THE conclave of citizens appointed to meet for investigating the affray of the preceding evening had now assembled. The workroom of Simon Glover was filled to crowding by personages of no little consequence, some of whom wore black velvet cloaks, and gold chains around their necks. They were, indeed, the fathers of the city, and there were bailies and deacons in the honoured number. There was an ireful and offended air of importance upon every brow as they conversed together, rather in whisper than aloud or in detail. Busiest among the busy, the little important assistant of the previous night, Oliver Proudfoote by name, and bonnet-maker by profession, was bustling among the crowd, much after the manner of the sea-gull, which flutters, screams, and sputters most at the commencement of a gale of wind, though one can hardly conceive what the bird has better to do than to fly to its nest and remain quiet till the gale is over.

Be that as it may, Master Proudfoote was in the midst of the crowd, his fingers upon every one's button and his mouth in every man's ear, embracing such as were near to his own stature, that he might more closely and mysteriously utter his sentiments, and standing on tiptoe, and supporting himself by the cloak-collars of tall men, that he might dole out to them also the same share of information. He felt himself one of the heroes of the affair, being conscious of the dignity of superior information on the subject as an eye-witness, and much disposed to push his connexion with the scuffle a few points beyond the modesty of truth. It cannot be said that his communications were in especial curious and important, consisting chiefly of such assertions as these —

‘It is all true, by St. John. I was there and saw it myself — was the first to run to the fray, and if it had not been for

me and another stout fellow, who came in about the same time, they had broken into Simon Glover's house, cut his throat, and carried his daughter off to the mountains. It is too evil usage — not to be suffered, neighbour Crookshank, not to be endured, neighbour Glass, not to be borne, neighbours Balneaves, Rollock, and Chrysteson. It was a mercy that I and that stout fellow came in, was it not, neighbour and worthy Bailie Craigdallie ?'

These speeches were dispersed by the busy bonnet-maker into sundry ears. Bailie Craigdallie, a portly guild-brother, the same who had advised the prorogation of their civic council to the present place and hour, a big, bully, good-looking man, shook the deacon from his cloak with pretty much the grace with which a large horse shrugs off the importunate fly that has beset him for ten minutes, and exclaimed, 'Silence, good citizens, here comes Simon Glover, in whom no man ever saw falsehood. We will hear the outrage from his own mouth.'

Simon being called upon to tell his tale, did so with obvious embarrassment, which he imputed to a reluctance that the burgh should be put in deadly feud with any one upon his account. It was, he dared to say, a masking or revel on the part of the young gallants about court, and the worst that might come of it would be, that he would put iron stanchions on his daughter's window, in case of such another frolic.

'Why, then, if this was a mere masking or mummary,' said Craigdallie, 'our townsman, Harry of the Wynd, did far wrong to cut off a gentleman's hand for such a harmless pleasantry, and the town may be brought to a heavy fine for it, unless we secure the person of the mutilator.'

'Our Lady forbid !' said the glover. 'Did you know what I do, you would be as much afraid of handling this matter as if it were glowing iron. But, since you will needs put your fingers in the fire, truth must be spoken. And come what will, I must say, that the matter might have ended ill for me and mine, but for the opportune assistance of Henry Gow, the armourer, well known to you all.'

'And mine also was not awanting,' said Oliver Proudfoot, 'though I do not profess to be utterly so good a swordsman as our neighbour, Henry Gow. You saw me, neighbour Glover, at the beginning of the fray ?'

'I saw you after the end of it, neighbour,' answered the glover, drily.

'True — true, I had forgot you were in your house while

the blows were going, and could not survey who were dealing them.

'Peace, neighbour Proudfoot — I prithee, peace,' said Craigdallie, who was obviously tired of the tuneless screeching of the worthy deacon.

'There is something mysterious here,' said the bailie, 'but I think I spy the secret. Our friend Simon is, as you all know, a peaceful man, and one that will rather sit down with wrong than put a friend, or say a neighbourhood, in danger to seek his redress. Thou, Henry, who art never wanting where the burgh needs a defender, tell us what *thou* knowest of this matter.'

Our smith told his story to the same purpose which we have already related, and the meddling maker of bonnets added as before, 'And thou sawest me there, honest smith, didst thou not?'

'Not I, in good faith, neighbour,' answered Henry, 'but you are a little man, you know, and I might overlook you.'

This reply produced a laugh at Oliver's expense, who laughed for company, but added, doggedly, 'I was one of the foremost to the rescue for all that.'

'Why, where wert thou, then, neighbour?' said the smith, 'for I saw you not, and I would have given the worth of the best suit of armour I ever wrought to have seen as stout a fellow as thou at my elbow.'

'I was no farther off, however, honest smith, and whilst thou wert laying on blows as if on an anvil, I was parrying those that the rest of the villains aimed at thee behind thy back, and that is the cause thou sawest me not.'

'I have heard of smiths of old time who had but one eye,' said Henry, 'I have two, but they are both set in my forehead, and so I could not see behind my back, neighbour.'

'The truth is, however,' persevered Master Oliver, 'there I was, and I will give Master Bailie my account of the matter, for the smith and I were first up to the fray.'

'Enough at present,' said the bailie, waving to Master Proudfoot an injunction of silence. 'The precognition of Simon Glover and Henry Gow would bear out a matter less worthy of belief. And now, my masters, your opinion what should be done. Here are all our burgher rights broken through and insulted, and you may well fancy that it is by some man of power, since no less dared have attempted such an outrage. My masters, it is hard on flesh and blood to submit to this

'The laws have framed us of lower rank than the princes and nobles, yet it is against reason to suppose that we will suffer our houses to be broken into, and the honour of our women insulted, without some redress.'

'It is not to be endured!' answered the citizens, unanimously.

Here Simon Glover interfered with a very anxious and ominous countenance. 'I hope still that all was not meant so ill as it seemed to us, my worthy neighbours, and I for one would cheerfully forgive the alarm and disturbance to my poor house, providing the Fair City were not brought into jeopardy for me. I beseech you to consider who are to be our judges that are to hear the case, and give or refuse redress. I speak among neighbours and friends, and therefore I speak openly. 'The King, God bless him' is so broken in mind and body, that he will but turn us over to some great man amongst his counsellors who shall be in favour for the time. Perchance he will refer us to his brother the Duke of Albany, who will make our petition for righting of our wrongs the pretence for squeezing money out of us.'

'We will none of Albany for our judge!' answered the meeting with the same unanimity as before.

'Or perhaps,' added Simon, 'he will bid the Duke of Rothsay take charge of it, and the wild young prince will regard the outrage as something for his gay companions to scoff at, and his minstrels to turn into song.'

'Away with Rothsay! he is too gay to be our judge,' again exclaimed the citizens.

Simon, emboldened by seeing he was reaching the point he aimed at, yet pronouncing the dreaded name with a half-whisper, next added, 'Would you like the Black Douglas better to deal with?'

There was no answer for a minute. They looked on each other with fallen countenances and blanched lips.

But Henry Smith spoke out boldly, and in a decided voice, the sentiments which all felt, but none else dared give words to — 'The Black Douglas to judge betwixt a burgher and a gentleman, nay, a nobleman, for all I know or care! The black devil of hell sooner! You are mad, father Simon, so much as to name so wild a proposal.'

There was again a silence of fear and uncertainty, which was at length broken by Bailie Craigdallie, who, looking very significantly to the speaker, replied, 'You are confident in a stout doublet, neighbour Smith, or you would not talk so boldly.'

'I am confident of a good heart under my doublet, such as it is, baihe,' answered the undaunted Henry, 'and though I speak but little, my mouth shall never be padlocked by any noble of them all.'

'Wear a thick doublet, good Henry, or do not speak so loud,' reiterated the baihe in the same significant tone 'There are Border men in the town who wear the bloody heart¹ on their shoulder But all this is no rede. What shall we do?'

'Short rede, good rede,' said the smith 'Let us to our provost, and demand his countenance and assistance.'

A murmur of applause went through the party, and Oliver Proudfoote exclaimed, 'That is what I have been saying for this half hour, and not one of ye would listen to me. "Let us go to our provost," said I "He is a gentleman himself, and ought to come between the burgh and the nobles in all matters."' "

'Hush, neighbours — hush, be wary what you say or do,' said a thin meagre figure of a man, whose diminutive person seemed still more reduced in size, and more assimilated to a shadow, by his efforts to assume an extreme degree of humility, and make himself, to suit his argument, look meaner yet, and yet more insignificant, than nature had made him.

'Pardon me,' said he, 'I am but a poor pottingar Nevertheless, I have been bred in Paris, and learned my humanities and my *cursus medendi* as well as some that call themselves learned leeches. Methinks I can tent this wound, and treat it with emollients. Here is our friend Simon Glover, who is, as you all know, a man of worship Think you he would not be the most willing of us all to pursue harsh courses here, since his family honour is so nearly concerned? And since he blenches away from the charge against these same revellers, consider if he may not have some good reason more than he cares to utter for letting the matter sleep It is not for me to put my finger on the sore, but, alack! we all know that young maidens are what I call fugitive essences. Suppose now, an honest maiden — I mean in all innocence — leaves her window unlatched on St. Valentine's morn, that some gallant cavalier may — in all honesty, I mean — become her Valentine for the season, and suppose the gallant be discovered, may she not scream out as if the visit were unexpected, and — and — bray all this in a mortar, and then consider, will it be a matter to place the town in feud for?'

The pottingar delivered his opinion in a most insinuating

¹ The well known cognizance of the house of Douglas.

manner, but he seemed to shrink into something less than his natural tenuity when he saw the blood rise in the old cheeks of Simon Glover, and inflame to the temples the complexion of the redoubted smith

The last, stepping forward, and turning a stein look on the alarmed pottingar, broke out as follows — 'Thou walking skeleton! thou asthmatic gallipot! thou poisoner by profession, if I thought that the puff of vile breath thou hast left could blight for the tenth part of a minute the fair fame of Catharine Glover, I would pound thee, quacksalver! in thine own mortar, and beat up thy wretched carrion with flower of brimstone, the only real medicine in thy booth, to make a salve to rub mangy hounds with!'

'Hold, son Henry — hold!' cried the glover, in a tone of authority, 'no man has title to speak of this matter but me Worshipful Bailie Craigdallie, since such is the construction that is put upon my patience, I am willing to pursue this riot to the uttermost, and though the issue may prove that we had better have been patient, you will all see that my Catharine hath not by any lightness or folly of hers afforded grounds for this great scandal'

The bailie also interposed 'Neighbour Henry,' said he, 'we came here to consult, and not to quarrel. As one of the fathers of the Fair City, I command thee to forego all evil will and mal-talent you may have against Master Pottingar Dwining'

'He is too poor a creature, bailie,' said Henry Gow, 'for me to harbour feud with — I that could destroy him and his booth with one blow of my forehammer'

'Peace, then, and hear me,' said the official. 'We all are as much believers in the honour of the Fair Maiden of Perth as in that of our Blessed Lady' Here he crossed himself devoutly 'But touching our appeal to our provost, are you agreed, neighbours, to put matter like this into our provost's hand, being against a powerful noble, as is to be feared?'

'The provost being himself a nobleman,' squeaked the pottingar, in some measure released from his terror by the intervention of the bailie 'God knows, I speak not to the disparagement of an honourable gentleman, whose forebears have held the office he now holds for many years —'

'By free choice of the citizens of Perth,' said the smith, interrupting the speaker with the tones of his deep and decisive voice

'Ay, surely,' said the disconcerted orator, 'by the voice of the citizens. How else? I pray you, friend Smith, interrupt me not. I speak to our worthy and eldest baillie, Craigdallie, according to my poor mind. I say that, come amongst us how he will, still this Sir Patrick Charteris is a nobleman, and hawks will not pick hawks' eyes out. He may well bear us out in a feud with the Highlandmen, and do the part of our provost and leader against them, but whether he that himself wears silk will take our part against brodered cloak and cloth of gold, though he may do so against tartan and Irish frieze, is something to be questioned. Take a fool's advice. We have saved our Maiden, of whom I never meant to speak harm, as truly I knew none. They have lost one man's hand, at least, thanks to Harry Smith ——'

'And to me,' added the little important bonnet-maker

'And to Oliver Proudfoot, as he tells us,' continued the pottangar, who contested no man's claim to glory, provided he was not himself compelled to tread the perilous paths which lead to it. 'I say, neighbours, since they have left a hand as a pledge they will never come in Couvrefew Street again, why, in my simple mind, we were best to thank our stout townsman, and the town having the honour and these rakehells the loss, that we should hush the matter up and say no more about it.'

These pacific counsels had their effect with some of the citizens, who began to nod and look exceedingly wise upon the advocate of acquiescence, with whom, notwithstanding the offence so lately given, Simon Glover seemed also to agree in opinion. But not so Henry Smith, who, seeing the consultation at a stand, took up the speech in his usual downright manner

'I am neither the oldest nor the richest among you, neighbours, and I am not sorry for it. Years will come, if one lives to see them, and I can win and spend my penny like another, by the blaze of the furnace and the wind of the bellows. But no man ever saw me sit down with wrong done in word or deed to our fair town, if man's tongue and man's hand could right it. Neither will I sit down with this outrage, if I can help it. I will go to the provost myself, if no one will go with me, he is a knight, it is true, and a gentleman of free and trueborn blood, as we all know, since Wallace's time, who settled his great-grandsire amongst us. But if he were the proudest nobleman in the land, he is the Provost of Perth, and for his own honour must see the freedoms and immunities of the burgh preserved — ay, and I know he will. I have made a steel

doublet for him, and have a good guess at the kind of heart that it was meant to cover.

'Surely,' said Bailie Craigdallie, 'it would be to no purpose to stir at court without Sir Patrick Charteris's countenance. the ready answer would be, "Go to your provost, you borrel loons" So, neighbours and townsmen, if you will stand by my side, I and our pottingar Dwining will repair presently to Kinfauns, with Sim Glover, the jolly smith, and gallant Oliver Proudpute, for witnesses to the onslaught, and speak with Sir Patrick Charteris, in name of the fair town'

'Nay,' said the peaceful man of medicine, 'leave me behind, I pray you I lack audacity to speak before a belted knight'

'Never regard that, neighbour, you must go,' said Bailie Craigdallie 'The town hold me a hot-headed carle for a man of threescore, Sim Glover is the offended party, we all know that Harry Gow spoils more harness with his sword than he makes with his hammer, and our neighbour Proudpute, who, take his own word, is at the beginning and end of every fray in Perth, is of course a man of action We must have at least one advocate amongst us for peace and quietness, and thou, pottingar, must be the man. Away with you, sirs, get your boots and your beasts—horse and hattock,¹ I say, and let us meet at the East Port, that is, if it is your pleasure, neighbours, to trust us with the matter'

'There can be no better rede, and we will all avouch it,' said the citizens 'If the provost take our part, as the Fair Town hath a right to expect, we may bell-the-cat with the best of them.'

'It is well, then, neighbours,' answered the bailie; 'so said, so shall be done Meanwhile, I have called the whole town-council together about this hour, and I have little doubt,' looking around the company, 'that, as so many of them who are in this place have resolved to consult with our provost, the rest will be compliant to the same resolution And, therefore, neighbours, and good burghers of the Fair City of Perth, horse and hattock, as I said before, and meet me at the East Port'

A general acclamation concluded the sitting of this species of privy council, or Lords of the Articles, and they dispersed, the deputation to prepare for the journey, and the rest to tell their impatient wives and daughters of the measures they had taken to render their chambers safe in future against the intrusion of gallants at unseasonable hours

¹ See Note 19

While nags are saddling, and the town-council debating, or rather putting in form what the leading members of their body had already adopted, it may be necessary, for the information of some readers, to state in distinct terms what is more circuitously intimated in the course of the former discussion

It was the custom at this period, when the strength of the feudal aristocracy controlled the rights, and frequently insulted the privileges, of the royal burghs of Scotland, that the latter, where it was practicable, often chose their provost, or chief magistrate, not out of the order of the merchants, shopkeepers, and citizens, who inhabited the town itself, and filled up the roll of the ordinary magistracy, but elected to that pre-eminent state some powerful nobleman, or baron, in the neighbourhood of the burgh, who was expected to stand their friend at court in such matters as concerned their common weal, and to lead their civil militia to fight, whether in general battle or in private feud, reinforcing them with his own feudal retainers. This protection was not always gratuitous. The provosts sometimes availed themselves of their situation to an unjustifiable degree, and obtained grants of lands and tenements belonging to the common good, or public property of the burgh, and thus made the citizens pay dear for the countenance which they afforded. Others were satisfied to receive the powerful aid of the townsmen in their own feudal quarrels, with such other marks of respect and benevolence as the burgh over which they presided were willing to gratify them with, in order to secure their active services in case of necessity. The baron, who was the regular protector of a royal burgh, accepted such free-will offerings without scruple, and repaid them by defending the rights of the town by arguments in the council and by bold deeds in the field.

The citizens of the town, or, as they loved better to call it, the Fair City, of Perth, had for several generations found a protector and provost of this kind in the knightly family of Charteris, Lords of Kinfauns, in the neighbourhood of the burgh. It was scarce a century (in the time of Robert III.) since the first of this distinguished family had settled in the strong castle which now belonged to them, with the picturesque and fertile scenes adjoining to it. But the history of the first settler, chivalrous and romantic in itself, was calculated to facilitate the settlement of an alien in the land in which his lot was cast. We relate it as it is given by an ancient and uniform

tradition, which carries in it great indications of truth, and is warrant enough, perhaps, for its insertion in graver histories than the present

During the brief career of the celebrated patriot Sir William Wallace, and when his arms had for a time expelled the English invaders from his native country, he is said to have undertaken a voyage to France, with a small band of trusty friends, to try what his presence (for he was respected through all countries for his prowess) might do to induce the French monarch to send to Scotland a body of auxiliary forces, or other assistance, to aid the Scots in regaining their independence

The Scottish champion was on board a small vessel, and steering for the port of Dieppe, when a sail appeared in the distance, which the mariners regarded, first with doubt and apprehension, and at last with confusion and dismay. Wallace demanded to know what was the cause of their alarm. The captain of the ship informed him, that the tall vessel which was bearing down, with the purpose of boarding that which he commanded, was the ship of a celebrated rover, equally famed for his courage, strength of body, and successful piracies. It was commanded by a gentleman named Thomas de Longueville, a Frenchman by birth, but by practice one of those pirates who called themselves friends to the sea and enemies to all who sailed upon that element. He attacked and plundered vessels of all nations, like one of the ancient Norse sea-kings, as they were termed, whose dominion was upon the mountain waves. The master added, that no vessel could escape the rover by flight, so speedy was the bark he commanded, and that no crew, however hardy, could hope to resist him, when, as was his usual mode of combat, he threw himself on board at the head of his followers

Wallace smiled sternly, while the master of the ship, with alarm in his countenance and tears in his eyes, described to him the certainty of their being captured by the Red Rover, a name given to De Longueville, because he usually displayed the blood-red flag, which he had now hoisted.

‘I will clear the narrow seas of this rover,’ said Wallace

Then calling together some ten or twelve of his own followers, Boyd, Kerlie, Seton, and others, to whom the dust of the most desperate battle was like the breath of life, he commanded them to arm themselves, and lie flat upon the deck, so as to be out of sight. He ordered the mariners below, excepting such as were absolutely necessary to manage the vessel, and he gave

the master instructions, upon pain of death, so to steer as that, while the vessel had an appearance of attempting to fly, he should in fact permit the Red Rover to come up with them and do his worst. Wallace himself then lay down on the deck, that nothing might be seen which could intimate any purpose of resistance. In a quarter of an hour De Longueville's vessel ran on board that of the Champion, and the Red Rover, casting out grappling irons to make sure of his prize, jumped on the deck in complete armour, followed by his men, who gave a terrible shout, as if victory had been already secured. But the armed Scots started up at once, and the rover found himself unexpectedly engaged with men accustomed to consider victory as secure when they were only opposed as one to two or three. Wallace himself rushed on the pirate captain, and a dreadful strife began betwixt them with such fury that the others suspended their own battle to look on, and seemed by common consent to refer the issue of the strife to the fate of the combat between the two chiefs. The pirate fought as well as man could do, but Wallace's strength was beyond that of ordinary mortals. He dashed the sword from the rover's hand, and placed him in such peril that, to avoid being cut down, he was fain to close with the Scottish Champion in hopes of overpowering him in the grapple. In this also he was foiled. They fell on the deck, locked in each other's arms, but the Frenchman fell undermost, and Wallace, fixing his grasp upon his gorget, compressed it so closely, notwithstanding it was made of the finest steel, that the blood gushed from his eyes, nose, and mouth, and he was only able to ask for quarter by signs. His men threw down their weapons and begged for mercy when they saw their leader thus severely handled. The victor granted them all their lives, but took possession of their vessel, and detained them prisoners.

When he came in sight of the French harbour, Wallace alarmed the place by displaying the rover's colours, as if De Longueville was coming to pillage the town. The bells were rung backward, horns were blown, and the citizens were hurrying to arms, when the scene changed. The Scottish Lion on his shield of gold was raised above the piratical flag, and announced that the Champion of Scotland was approaching, like a falcon with his prey in his clutch. He landed with his prisoner, and carried him to the court of France, where, at Wallace's request, the robberies which the pirate had committed were forgiven, and the king even conferred the honour of

knighthood on Sir Thomas de Longueville, and offered to take him into his service. But the rover had contracted such a friendship for his generous victor, that he insisted on uniting his fortunes with those of Wallace, with whom he returned to Scotland, and fought by his side in many a bloody battle, where the prowess of Sir Thomas de Longueville was remarked as inferior to that of none, save of his heroic conqueror. His fate also was more fortunate than that of his patron. Being distinguished by the beauty as well as strength of his person, he rendered himself so acceptable to a young lady, heiress of the ancient family of Charteris, that she chose him for her husband, bestowing on him with her hand the fair baronial Castle of Kinfauns, and the domains annexed to it. Their descendants took the name of Charteris, as connecting themselves with their maternal ancestors, the ancient proprietors of the property, though the name of Thomas de Longueville was equally honoured amongst them, and the large two-handed sword with which he mowed the ranks of war was, and is still, preserved among the family muniments. Another account is, that the family name of De Longueville himself was Charteris. The estate afterwards passed to a family of Blairs, and is now the property of Lord Gray.

These barons of Kinfauns,¹ from father to son, held, for several generations, the office of Provost of Perth, the vicinity of the castle and town rendering it a very convenient arrangement for mutual support. The Sir Patrick of this history had more than once led out the men of Perth to battles and skirmishes with the restless Highland depredators, and with other enemies, foreign and domestic. True it is, he used sometimes to be weary of the slight and frivolous complaints unnecessarily brought before him, and in which he was requested to interest himself. Hence he had sometimes incurred the charge of being too proud as a nobleman, or too indolent as a man of wealth, and one who was too much addicted to the pleasures of the field, and the exercise of feudal hospitality, to bestir himself upon all and every occasion when the Fair Town would have desired his active interference. But, notwithstanding that this occasioned some slight murmuring, the citizens, upon any serious cause of alarm, were wont to rally around their provost, and were warmly supported by him both in council and action.

¹ See Note 20

CHAPTER VIII

Within the bounds of Annandale
The gentle Johnstones ride,
They have been there a thousand years,
A thousand more they'll bide

Old Ballad

THE character and quality of Sir Patrick Charteris, the Provost of Perth, being such as we have sketched in the last chapter, let us now return to the deputation which was in the act of rendezvousing at the East Port,¹ in order to wait upon that dignitary with their complaints at Kinfauns.

And first appeared Simon Glover, on a pacing palfrey, which had sometimes enjoyed the honour of bearing the fairer person as well as the lighter weight of his beautiful daughter. His cloak was muffled round the lower part of his face, as a sign to his friends not to interrupt him by any questions while he passed through the streets, and partly, perhaps, on account of the coldness of the weather. The deepest anxiety was seated on his brow, as if the more he meditated on the matter he was engaged in, the more difficult and perilous it appeared. He only greeted by silent gestures his friends as they came to the rendezvous.

A strong black horse, of the old Galloway breed, of an under size, and not exceeding fourteen hands, but high-shouldered, strong-limbed, well coupled, and round barrelled, bore to the East Port the gallant smith. A judge of the animal might see in his eye a spark of that vicious temper which is frequently the accompaniment of the form that is most vigorous and enduring, but the weight, the hand, and the seat of the rider, added to the late regular exercise of a long journey, had subdued his stubbornness for the present. He was accompanied by the honest bonnet-maker, who being, as the reader is aware, a little round man, and what is vulgarly called duck-legged,

¹ See Note 21.

had planted himself like a red pincushion (for he was wrapped in a scarlet cloak, over which he had slung a hawking-pouch), on the top of a great saddle, which he might be said rather to be perched upon than to bestride. The saddle and the man were girthed on the ridge-bone of a great trampling Flemish mare, with a nose turned up in the air like a camel, a huge fleece of hair at each foot, and every hoof full as large in circumference as a frying-pan. The contrast between the beast and the rider was so extremely extraordinary, that, whilst chance passengers contented themselves with wondering how he got up, his friends were anticipating with sorrow the perils which must attend his coming down again, for the high-seated horseman's feet did not by any means come beneath the laps of the saddle. He had associated himself to the smith, whose motions he had watched for the purpose of joining him, for it was Oliver Proudfoot's opinion that men of action showed to most advantage when beside each other, and he was delighted when some wag of the lower class had gravity enough to cry out, without laughing outright, 'There goes the pride of Perth — there go the slashing craftsmen, the jolly Smith of the Wynd and the bold bonnet-maker!'

It is true, the fellow who gave this all-hail thrust his tongue in his cheek to some scapegraces like himself, but as the bonnet-maker did not see this bye-play, he generously threw him a silver penny to encourage his respect for martialists. This munificence occasioned their being followed by a crowd of boys, laughing and hallooing, until Henry Smith, turning back, threatened to switch the foremost of them — a resolution which they did not wait to see put in execution.

'Here are we the witnesses,' said the little man on the large horse, as they joined Simon Glover at the East Port, 'but where are they that should back us? Ah, brother Henry! authority is a load for an ass rather than a spirited horse — it would but clog the motions of such young fellows as you and me.'

'I could well wish to see you bear ever so little of that same weight, worthy Master Proudfoot,' replied Henry Gow, 'were it but to keep you firm in the saddle, for you bounce about as if you were dancing a jig on your seat, without any help from your legs.'

'Ay — ay, I raise myself in my stirrups to avoid the jolting. She is cruelly hard set, this mare of mine, but she has carried me in field and forest, and through some passages that were

something perilous, so Jezabel and I part not. I call her Jezabel, after the Princess of Castille.'

'Isabel, I suppose you mean,' answered the smith

'Ay — Isabel, or Jezabel — all the same, you know. But here comes Bailie Craigdallie at last, with that poor, creeping, cowardly creature the pottingar. They have brought two town officers with their partizans, to guard their fair persons, I suppose. If there is one thing I hate more than another, it is such a sneaking varlet as that Dwining.'

'Have a care he does not hear you say so,' said the smith. 'I tell thee, bonnet-maker, that there is more danger in yonder slight wasted anatomy than in twenty stout fellows like yourself.'

'Pshaw! Bully Smith, you are but jesting with me,' said Oliver, softening his voice, however, and looking towards the pottingar, as if to discover in what limb or lineament of his wasted face and form lay any appearance of the menaced danger, and his examination reassuring him, he answered boldly, 'Blades and bucklers, man, I would stand the feud of a dozen such as Dwining. What could he do to any man with blood in his veins?'

'He could give him a dose of physic,' answered the smith, drily.

They had no time for further colloquy, for Bailie Craigdallie called to them to take the road to Kinfauns, and himself showed the example. As they advanced at a leisurely pace, the discourse turned on the reception which they were to expect from their provost, and the interest which he was likely to take in the aggression which they complained of. The glover seemed particularly desponding, and talked more than once in a manner which implied a wish that they would yet consent to let the matter rest. He did not speak out very plainly, however, fearful, perhaps, of the malignant interpretation which might be derived from any appearance of his flinching from the assertion of his daughter's reputation. Dwining seemed to agree with him in opinion, but spoke more cautiously than in the morning.

'After all,' said the bailie, 'when I think of all the propines and good gifts which have passed from the good town to my Lord Provost's, I cannot think he will be backward to show himself. More than one lusty boat, laden with Bordeaux wine, has left the South Shore to discharge its burden under the Castle of Kinfauns. I have some right to speak of that, who was the merchant importer.'

'And,' said Dwining, with his squeaking voice, 'I could

speak of delicate confections, curious comfits, loaves of wastel bread, and even cakes of that rare and delicious condiment which men call sugar, that have gone thither to help out a bridal banquet, or a kirstening feast, or such-like. But, alack, Bailie Craigdalhie, wine is drunk, comfits are eaten, and the gift is forgotten when the flavour is past away. Alas! neighbour, the banquet of last Christmas is gone like the last year's snow.

'But there have been gloves full of gold pieces,' said the magistrate

'I should know that who wrought them,' said Simon, whose professional recollections still mingled with whatever else might occupy his mind. 'One was a hawking-glove for my lady. I made it something wide. Her ladyship found no fault, in consideration of the intended lining.'

'Well, go to,' said Bailie Craigdalhie, 'the less I lie, and if these are not to the fore, it is the provost's fault, and not the town's. They could neither be eat nor drunk in the shape in which he got them.'

'I could speak of a brave armour too,' said the smith, 'but, *cogan na schie!*¹ as John Highlandman says — I think the knight of Kinfauns will do his devon by the burgh in peace or war, and it is needless to be reckoning the town's good deeds till we see him thankless for them.'

'So say I,' cried our friend Proudfoot, from the top of his mare. 'We roystering blades never bear so base a mind as to count for wine and walnuts with a friend like Sir Patrick Charteris. Nay, trust me, a good woodsman like Sir Patrick will prize the right of hunting and sporting over the lands of the burgh as an high privilege, and one which, his Majesty the King's Grace excepted, is neither granted to lord nor loon save to our provost alone.'

As the bonnet-maker spoke, there was heard on the left hand the cry of, 'So so — waw waw — haw,' being the shout of a falconer to his hawk.

'Methinks yonder is a fellow using the privilege you mention, who, from his appearance, is neither king nor provost,' said the smith.

'Ay, marry, I see him,' said the bonnet-maker, who imagined the occasion presented a prime opportunity to win honour. 'Thou and I, jolly smith, will prick towards him and put him to the question.'

'Have with you, then,' cried the smith, and his companion

¹ Peace or war, I care not.

spurred his mare and went off, never doubting that Gow was at his heels

But Cringdallie caught Henry's horse by the reins. 'Stand fast by the standard,' he said, 'let us see the luck of our light horseman. If he procures himself a broken pate, he will be quieter for the rest of the day'

'From what I already see,' said the smith, 'he may easily come by such a boon. Yonder fellow, who stops so impudently to look at us, as if he were engaged in the most lawful sport in the world—I guess him, by his trotting hobbler, his rusty head piece with the cock's feather, and long two handed sword, to be the follower of some of the southland lords—men who live so near the Southron, that the black-jack is never off their backs, and who are as free of their blows as they are light in their fingers.'

Whilst they were thus speculating on the issue of the encounter, the valiant bonnet maker began to pull up Jezabel, in order that the smith, who he still concluded was close behind, might overtake him, and either advance first or at least abreast of himself. But when he saw him at a hundred yards' distance, standing composedly with the rest of the group, the flesh of the champion, like that of the old Spanish general, began to tremble, in anticipation of the dangers into which his own venturesome spirit was about to involve it. Yet the consciousness of being countenanced by the neighbourhood of so many friends, the hopes that the appearance of such odds must intimidate the single intruder, and the shame of abandoning an enterprise in which he had volunteered, and when so many persons must witness his disgrace, surmounted the strong inclination which prompted him to wheel Jezabel to the right about, and return to the friends whose protection he had quitted as fast as her legs could carry them. He accordingly continued his direction towards the stranger, who increased his alarm considerably by putting his little nag in motion, and riding to meet him at a brisk trot. On observing this apparently offensive movement, our hero looked over his left shoulder more than once, as if reconnoitring the ground for a retreat, and in the meanwhile came to a decided halt. But the Philistine was upon him ere the bonnet-maker could decide whether to fight or fly, and a very ominous looking Philistine he was. His figure was gaunt and lathy, his visage marked by two or three ill favoured scars, and the whole man had much the air of one accustomed to say, 'Stand and deliver,' to a true man.

This individual began the discourse by exclaiming, in tones as sinister as his looks, 'The devil catch you for a cuckoo, why do you ride across the moor to spoil my sport?'

'Worthy stranger,' said our friend, in the tone of pacific remonstrance, 'I am Oliver Proudfoot, a burgess of Perth, and a man of substance, and yonder is the worshipful Adam Craigdallie, the oldest baillie of the burgh, with the fighting Smith of the Wynd, and three or four armed men more, who desire to know your name, and how you come to take your pleasure over these lands belonging to the burgh of Perth, although, nevertheless, I will answer for them, it is not their wish to quarrel with a gentleman, or stranger, for any accidental trespass, only it is their use and wont not to grant such leave, unless it is duly asked, and—and—therefore I desire to know your name, worthy sir'

The grim and loathly aspect with which the falconer had regarded Oliver Proudfoot during his harangue had greatly disconcerted him, and altogether altered the character of the inquiry which, with Henry Gow to back him, he would probably have thought most fitting for the occasion

The stranger replied to it, modified as it was, with a most inauspicious grin, which the scars of his visage made appear still more repulsive 'You want to know my name? My name is the Devil's Dick of Hellgarth, well known in Annandale for a gentle Johnstone I follow the stout Laird of Wamphray, who rides with his kinsman the redoubted Lord of Johnstone, who is banded with the doughty Earl of Douglas, and the earl and the lord, and the laird and I, the esquire, fly our hawks where we find our game, and ask no man whose ground we ride over'¹

'I will do your message, sir,' replied Oliver Proudfoot, meekly enough, for he began to be very desirous to get free of the embassy which he had so rashly undertaken, and was in the act of turning his horse's head, when the Annandale man added—

'And take you this to boot, to keep you in mind that you met the Devil's Dick, and to teach you another time to beware how you spoil the sport, of any one who wears the flying spur on his shoulder'

With these words he applied two or three smart blows of his riding-rod upon the luckless bonnet-maker's head and person. Some of them lighted upon Jezabel, who, turning sharply round,

¹ See Johnstone Family Note 22

laid her rider upon the moor, and galloped back towards the party of citizens.

Proudfute, thus overthrown, began to cry for assistance in no very manly voice, and almost in the same breath to whimper for mercy, for his antagonist, dismounting almost as soon as he fell, offered a whinger, or large wood-knife, to his throat, while he rifled the pockets of the unlucky citizen, and even examined his hawking-bag, swearing two or three grisly oaths, that he would have what it contained, since the wearer had interrupted his sport. He pulled the belt rudely off, terrifying the prostrate bonnet-maker still more by the regardless violence which he used, as, instead of taking the pains to unbuckle the strap, he drew till the fastening gave way. But apparently it contained nothing to his mind. He threw it carelessly from him, and at the same time suffered the dismounted cavalier to rise, while he himself remounted his hobbler, and looked towards the rest of Oliver's party, who were now advancing.

When they had seen their delegate overthrown, there was some laughter, so much had the vaunting humour of the bonnet-maker prepared his friends to rejoice when, as Henry Smith termed it, they saw their Oliver meet with a Rowland. But when the bonnet-maker's adversary was seen to bestride him, and handle him in the manner described, the armourer could hold out no longer. 'Please you, good Master Bailie, I cannot endure to see our townsman beaten and rifled, and like to be murdered before us all. It reflects upon the Fair Town, and if it is neighbour Proudfute's misfortune, it is our shame. I must to his rescue.'

'We will all go to his rescue,' answered Bailie Craigdallie, 'but let no man strike without order from me. We have more feuds on our hands, it is to be feared, than we have strength to bring to good end. And therefore I charge you all, more especially you, Henry of the Wynd, in the name of the Fair City, that you make no stroke but in self-defence.'

They all advanced, therefore, in a body, and the appearance of such a number drove the plunderer from his booty. He stood at gaze, however, at some distance, like the wolf, which, though it retreats before the dogs, cannot be brought to absolute flight.

Henry, seeing this state of things, spurred his horse and advanced far before the rest of the party, up towards the scene of Oliver Proudfute's misfortune. His first task was to catch Jezabel by the flowing rein, and his next to lead her to meet her discomfited master, who was crippling towards him, his

clothes much soiled with his fall, his eyes streaming with tears, from pain as well as mortification, and altogether exhibiting an aspect so unlike the spruce and dapper importance of his ordinary appearance, that the honest smith felt compassion for the little man, and some remorse at having left him exposed to such disgrace. All men, I believe, enjoy an ill-natured joke. The difference is, that an ill-natured person can drink out to the very dregs the amusement which it affords, while the better-moulded mind soon loses the sense of the ridiculous in sympathy for the pain of the sufferer.

'Let me pitch you up to your saddle again, neighbour,' said the smith, dismounting at the same time, and assisting Oliver to scramble into his war-saddle, as a monkey might have done.

'May God forgive you, neighbour Smith, for not backing of me! I would not have believed in it, though fifty credible witnesses had sworn it of you.'

Such were the first words, spoken in sorrow more than anger, by which the dismayed Oliver vented his feelings.

'The bailie kept hold of my horse by the bridle, and besides,' Henry continued, with a smile, which even his compassion could not suppress, 'I thought you would have accused me of diminishing your honour, if I brought you aid against a single man. But cheer up! the villain took foul odds of you, your horse not being well at command.'

'That is true—that is true,' said Oliver, eagerly catching at the apology.

'And yonder stands the faitour, rejoicing at the mischief he has done, and triumphing in your overthrow, like the king in the romance, who played upon the fiddle whilst a city was burning. Come thou with me, and thou shalt see how we will handle him. Nay, fear not that I will desert thee this time.'

So saying, he caught Jezabel by the rein, and galloping alongside of her, without giving Oliver time to express a negative, he rushed towards the Devil's Dick, who had halted on the top of a rising ground at some distance. The gentle Johnstone, however, either that he thought the contest unequal, or that he had fought enough for the day, snapping his fingers and throwing his hand out with an air of defiance, spurred his horse into a neighbouring bog, through which he seemed to flutter like a wild duck, swinging his lure round his head, and whistling to his hawk all the while, though any other horse and rider must have been instantly bogged up to the saddle-girths.

'There goes a thoroughbred moss-trooper,' said the smith.

'That fellow will fight or flee as suits his humour, and there is no use to pursue him, any more than to hunt a wild goose. He has got your purse, I doubt me, for they seldom leave off till they are full-handed.'

'Ye—ye—yes,' said Proudpute, in a melancholy tone, 'he has got my purse, but there is less matter since he hath left the hawking bag.'

'Nay, the hawking-bag had been an emblem of personal victory, to be sure—a trophy, as the minstrels call it.'

'There is more in it than that, friend,' said Oliver, significantly

'Why, that is well, neighbour. I love to hear you speak in your own scholarly tone again. Cheer up, you have seen the villain's back, and regained the trophies you had lost when taken at advantage.'

'Ah, Henry Gow—Henry Gow!' said the bonnet-maker, and stopped short with a deep sigh, nearly amounting to a groan.

'What is the matter?' asked his friend—'what is it you vex yourself about now?'

'I have some suspicion, my dearest friend, Henry Smith, that the villain fled for fear of you, not of me.'

'Do not think so,' replied the armourer. 'he saw two men and fled, and who can tell whether he fled for one or the other? Besides, he knows by experience your strength and activity. We all saw how you kicked and struggled when you were on the ground.'

'Did I?' said poor Proudpute. 'I do not remember it, but I know it is my best point. I am a strong dog in the loins. But did they all see it?'

'All as much as I,' said the smith, smothering an inclination to laughter.

'But thou wilt remind them of it?'

'Be assured I will,' answered Henry, 'and of thy desperate rally even now. Mark what I say to Bailie Craigdallie, and make the best of it.'

'It is not that I require any evidence in my favour, for I am as brave by nature as most men in Perth, but only——' Here the man of valour paused.

'But only what?' inquired the stout armourer.

'But only I am afraid of being killed. To leave my pretty wife and my young family, you know, would be a sad change, Smith. You will know this when it is your own case, and will feel abated in courage.'

'It is like that I may,' said the armourer, musing.

'Then I am so accustomed to the use of arms, and so well breathed, that few men can match me. It's all here,' said the little man, expanding his breast like a trussed fowl, and patting himself with his hands — 'here is room for all the wind machinery'

'I daresay you are long-breathed — long-winded; at least your speech bewrays ——'

'My speech! You are a wag —— But I have got the stern post of a dromond brought up the river from Dundee'

'The stern post of a Drummund!' exclaimed the armourer, 'conscience, man, it will put you in feud with the whole clan — not the least wrathful in the country, as I take it'

'St Andrew, man, you put me out! I mean a dromond — that is, a large ship I have fixed this post in my yard, and had it painted and carved something like a soldan or Saracen, and with him I breathe myself, and will wield my two-handed sword against him, thrust or point, for an hour together'

'That must make you familiar with the use of your weapon,' said the smith

'Ay, marry does it, and sometimes I will place you a bonnet — an old one, most likely — on my soldan's head, and cleave it with such a downright blow that, in troth, the infidel has but little of his skull remaining to hit at'

'That is unlucky, for you will lose your practice,' said Henry 'But how say you, bonnet-maker? I will put on my head-piece and corslet one day, and you shall hew at me, allowing me my broadsword to parry and pay back? Eh, what say you?'

'By no manner of means, my dear friend. I should do you too much evil, besides, to tell you the truth, I strike far more freely at a helmet or bonnet when it is set on my wooden soldan, then I am sure to fetch it down But when there is a plume of feathers in it that nod, and two eyes gleaming fiercely from under the shadow of the visor, and when the whole is dancing about here and there, I acknowledge it puts out my hand of fence'

'So, if men would but stand stock-still like your soldan, you would play the tyrant with them, Master Proudfoote?'

'In time, and with practice, I conclude I might,' answered Oliver 'But here we come up with the rest of them Bailie Chagdallie looks angry, but it is not his kind of anger that frightens me'

You are to recollect, gentle reader, that as soon as the bailie and those who attended him saw that the smith had come up to the forlorn bonnet-maker, and that the stranger had retreated, they gave themselves no trouble about advancing further to his assistance, which they regarded as quite ensured by the presence of the redoubted Henry Gow. They had resumed their straight road to Kinfauns, desirous that nothing should delay the execution of their mission. As some time had elapsed ere the bonnet-maker and the smith rejoined the party, Bailie Craigdallie asked them, and Henry Smith in particular, what they meant by dallying away precious time by riding uphill after the falconer.

'By the mass, it was not my fault, Master Bailie,' replied the smith. 'If ye will couple up an ordinary Low Country greyhound with a Highland wolf-dog, you must not blame the first of them for taking the direction in which it pleases the last to drag him on. It was so, and not otherwise, with my neighbour Oliver Proudfoot. He no sooner got up from the ground, but he mounted his mare like a flash of lightning, and, enraged at the unknightly advantage which yonder rascal had taken of his stumbling horse, he flew after him like a dromedary. I could not but follow, both to prevent a second stumble and secure our over-bold friend and champion from the chance of some ambush at the top of the hill. But the villain, who is a follower of some Lord of the Marches, and wears a winged spur for his cognizance, fled from our neighbour like fire from flint.'

The senior bailie of Perth listened with surprise to the legend which it had pleased Gow to circulate, for, though not much caring for the matter, he had always doubted the bonnet-maker's romancing account of his own exploits, which hereafter he must hold as in some degree orthodox.

The shrewd old glover looked closer into the matter. 'You will drive the poor bonnet-maker mad,' he whispered to Henry, 'and set him a-ringing his clapper as if he were a town-bell on a rejoicing day, when for order and decency it were better he were silent.'

'O, by Our Lady, father,' replied the smith, 'I love the poor little braggadocio, and could not think of his sitting rueful and silent in the provost's hall, while all the rest of them, and in especial that venomous pottinger, were telling their mind.'

'Thou art even too good-natured a fellow, Henry,' answered Simon. 'But mark the difference betwixt these two men. The harmless little bonnet-maker assumes the airs of a dragon, to

disguise his natural cowardice, while the pottingar wilfully desires to show himself timid, poor-spirited, and humble, to conceal the danger of his temper. The adder is not the less deadly that he creeps under a stone. I tell thee, son Henry, that, for all his sneaking looks and timorous talking, this wretched anatomy loves mischief more than he fears danger. But here we stand in front of the provost's castle, and a lordly place is Kinfauns, and a credit to the city it is, to have the owner of such a gallant castle for its chief magistrate.

'A goodly fortalice, indeed,' said the smith, looking at the broad winding Tay, as it swept under the bank on which the castle stood, like its modern successor, and seemed the queen of the valley, although, on the opposite side of the river, the strong walls of Elcho appeared to dispute the pre-eminence. Elcho, however, was in that age a peaceful nunnery, and the walls with which it was surrounded were the barriers of secluded vestals, not the bulwarks of an armed garrison. 'Tis a brave castle,' said the armourer, again looking at the towers of Kinfauns, 'and the breastplate and target of the bonny course of the Tay. It were worth hipping a good blade, before wrong were offered to it.'

The porter of Kinfauns, who knew from a distance the persons and characters of the party, had already opened the courtyard gate for their entrance, and sent notice to Sir Patrick Charteris that the eldest baillie of Perth, with some other good citizens, were approaching the castle. The good knight, who was getting ready for a hawking-party, heard the intimation with pretty much the same feelings that the modern representative of a burgh hears of the menaced visitation of a party of his worthy electors, at a time rather unseasonable for their reception. That is, he internally devoted the intruders to Mahound and Termagaunt, and outwardly gave orders to receive them with all decorum and civility, commanded the sewers to bring hot venison steaks and cold baked meats into the knightly hall with all despatch, and the butler to broach his casks, and do his duty, for if the Fair City of Perth sometimes filled his cellar, her citizens were always equally ready to assist at emptying his flagons.

The good burghers were reverently marshalled into the hall, where the knight, who was in a riding-habit, and booted up to the middle of his thighs, received them with a mixture of courtesy and patronising condescension, wishing them all the while at the bottom of the Tay, on account of the interruption

their arrival gave to his proposed amusement of the morning. He met them in the midst of the hall, with bare head and bonnet in hand, and some such salutation as the following — ‘Ha, my Master Eldest Bailie, and you, worthy Simon Glover, fathers of the Fair City, and you, my learned pottingar, and you, stout smith, and my slashing bonnet-maker too, who cracks more skulls than he covers, how come I to have the pleasure of seeing so many friends so early? I was thinking to see my hawks fly, and your company will make the sport more pleasant — (Aside, I trust in Our Lady they may break their necks!) — that is, always, unless the city have any commands to lay on me. Butler Gilbert, despatch, thou knave. But I hope you have no more grave errand than to try if the malvoisie holds its flavour?’

The city delegates answered to their provost’s civilities by inclinations and congees, more or less characteristic, of which the pottingar’s bow was the lowest and the smith’s the least ceremonious. Probably he knew his own value as a fighting man upon occasion. To the general compliment the elder bailie replied.

‘Sir Patrick Charteris, and our noble Lord Provost,’ said Craigdallie, gravely, ‘had our errand been to enjoy the hospitality with which we have been often regaled here, our manners would have taught us to tarry till your lordship had invited us, as on other occasions. And as to hawking, we have had enough on’t for one morning, since a wild fellow, who was flying a falcon hard by on the moor, unhorsed and cudgelled our worthy friend Oliver Bonnet-maker, or Proudpute, as some men call him, merely because he questioned him, in your honour’s name, and the town of Perth’s, who or what he was that took so much upon him.’

‘And what account gave he of himself?’ said the provost. ‘By St. John! I will teach him to forestall my sport!’

‘So please your lordship,’ said the bonnet-maker, ‘he did take me at disadvantage. But I got on horseback again afterwards, and pricked after him gallantly. He calls himself Richard the Devil.’

‘How, man! he that the rhymes and romances are made on?’ said the provost. ‘I thought that smaik’s name had been Robert.’

‘I trow they be different, my lord. I only graced this fellow with the full title, for indeed he called himself the Devil’s Dick, and said he was a Johnstone, and a follower of the lord of

that name But I put him back into the bog, and recovered my hawking-bag, which he had taken when I was at disadvantage'

Sir Patrick paused for an instant 'We have heard,' said he, 'of the Lord of Johnstone, and of his followers Little is to be had by meddling with them Smith, tell me, did you endure this?'

'Ay, faith did I, Sir Patrick, having command from my betters not to help'

'Well, if thou satst down with it,' said the provost, 'I see not why we should rise up, especially as Master Oliver Proud-fute, though taken at advantage at first, has, as he has told us, recovered his reputation and that of the burgh But here comes the wine at length Fill round to my good friends and guests till the wine leap over the cup Prosperity to St Johnston, and a merry welcome to you all, my honest friends' And now sit you to eat a morsel, for the sun is high up, and it must be long since you thrifty men have broken your fast'

'Before we eat, my Lord Provost,' said the bailie, 'let us tell you the pressing cause of our coming, which as yet we have not touched upon'

'Nay, prithee, bailie,' said the provost, 'put it off till thou hast eaten Some complaint against the rascally jackmen and retainers of the nobles, for playing at football on the streets of the burgh, or some such goodly matter'

'No, my lord,' said Craigdallie, stoutly and firmly 'It is the jackmen's masters of whom we complain, for playing at football with the honour of our families, and using as little ceremony with our daughters' sleeping-chambers as if they were in a bordel at Paris A party of leiving night-walkers — courtiers and men of rank, as there is but too much reason to believe — attempted to scale the windows of Simon Glover's house last night, they stood in their defence with drawn weapons when they were interrupted by Henry Smith, and fought till they were driven off by the rising of the citizens.'

'How!' said Sir Patrick, setting down the cup which he was about to raise to his head. 'Cock's-body, make that manifest to me, and, by the soul of Thomas of Longueville, I will see you righted with my best power, were it to cost me life and land Who attests this? Simon Glover, you are held an honest and a cautious man — do you take the truth of this charge upon your conscience?'

'My lord,' said Simon, 'understand I am no willing complainer in this weighty matter No damage has arisen, save

to the breakers of the peace themselves. I fear only great power could have encouraged such lawless audacity, and I were unwilling to put feud between my native town and some powerful nobleman on my account. But it has been said that, if I hang back in prosecuting this complaint, it will be as much as admitting that my daughter expected such a visit, which is a direct falsehood. Therefore, my lord, I will tell your lordship what happened, so far as I know, and leave further proceeding to your wisdom.' He then told, from point to point, all that he had seen of the attack.

Sir Patrick Charteris, listening with much attention, seemed particularly struck with the escape of the man who had been made prisoner. 'Strange,' he said, 'that you did not secure him when you had him. Did you not look at him so as to know him again?'

'I had but the light of a lantern, my Lord Provost, and as to suffering him to escape, I was alone,' said the glover, 'and old. But yet I might have kept him, had I not heard my daughter shriek in the upper room, and ere I had returned from her chamber the man had escaped through the garden.'

'Now, armourer, as a true man and a good soldier,' said Sir Patrick, 'tell me what you know of this matter.'

Henry Gow, in his own decided style, gave a brief but clear narrative of the whole affair.

Honest Proudfoot, being next called upon, began his statement with an air of more importance. 'Touching this awful and astounding tumult within the burgh, I cannot altogether, it is true, say with Henry Gow that I saw the very beginning. But it will not be denied that I beheld a great part of the latter end, and especially that I procured the evidence most effectual to convict the knaves.'

'And what is it, man?' said Sir Patrick Charteris. 'Never lose time fumbling and prating about it. What is it?'

'I have brought your lordship, in this pouch, what one of the rogues left behind him,' said the little man. 'It is a trophy which, in good faith and honest truth, I do confess I won not by the blade, but I claim the credit of securing it with that presence of mind which few men possess amidst flashing torches and clashing weapons. I secured it, my lord, and here it is.'

So saying, he produced, from the hawking pouch already mentioned, the stiffened hand which had been found on the scene of the skirmish.

'Nay, bonnet-maker,' said the provost, 'I'll warrant thee man enough to secure a rogue's hand after it is cut from the body. What do you look so busily for in your bag?'

'There should have been—there was—a ring, my lord, which was on the knave's finger. I fear I have been forgetful, and left it at home, for I took it off to show to my wife, as she cared not to look upon the dead hand, as women love not such sights. But yet I thought I had put it on the finger again. Nevertheless, it must, I bethink me, be at home. I will ride back for it, and Henry Smith will trot along with me.'

'We will all trot with thee,' said Sir Patrick Charteris, 'since I am for Perth myself. Look you, honest burghers and good neighbours of Perth, you may have thought me unapt to be moved by light complaints and trivial breaches of your privileges, such as small trespasses on your game, the barons' followers playing football in the street, and such-like. But, by the soul of Thomas of Longueville, you shall not find Patrick Charteris slothful in a matter of this importance. 'This hand,' he continued, holding up the severed joint, 'belongs to one who hath worked no drudgery. We will put it in a way to be known and claimed of the owner, if his comrades of the revel have but one spark of honour in them. Hark you, Gerard; get me some half-score of good men instantly to horse, and let them take jack and spear. Meanwhile, neighbours, if feud arise out of this, as is most likely, we must come to each other's support. If my poor house be attacked, how many men will you bring to my support?'

The burghers looked at Henry Gow, to whom they instinctively turned when such matters were discussed. 'I will answer,' said he, 'for fifty good fellows to be assembled ere the common bell has rung ten minutes, for a thousand, in the space of an hour.'

'It is well,' answered the gallant provost, 'and in the case of need, I will come to aid the Fair City with such men as I can make. And now, good friends, let us to horse.'

CHAPTER IX

If I know how to manage these affairs,
Thus thrust disorderly upon my hands,
Never believe me —

Richard II

IT was early in the afternoon of St. Valentine's Day that the prior of the Dominicans was engaged in discharge of his duties as confessor to a penitent of no small importance. This was an elderly man, of a goodly presence, a florid and healthful cheek, the under part of which was shaded by a venerable white beard, which descended over his bosom. The large and clear blue eyes, with the broad expanse of brow, expressed dignity, but it was of a character which seemed more accustomed to receive honours voluntarily paid than to enforce them when they were refused. The good-nature of the expression was so great as to approach to defenceless simplicity or weakness of character, unfit, it might be inferred, to repel intrusion or subdue resistance. Amongst the grey locks of this personage was placed a small circlet or coronet of gold, upon a blue fillet. His beads, which were large and conspicuous, were of native gold, rudely enough wrought, but ornamented with Scottish pearls of rare size and beauty. These were his only ornaments, and a long crimson robe of silk, tied by a sash of the same colour, formed his attire. His shrift being finished, he arose heavily from the embroidered cushion upon which he kneeled during his confession, and, by the assistance of a crutch-headed staff of ebony, moved, lame and ungracefully, and with apparent pain, to a chair of state, which, surmounted by a canopy, was placed for his accommodation by the chimney of the lofty and large apartment.

This was Robert, third of that name, and the second of the ill-fated family of Stuart who filled the throne of Scotland. He had many virtues, and was not without talent, but it was his great misfortune that, like others of his devoted line, his

merits were not of a kind suited to the part which he was called upon to perform in life. The king of so fierce a people as the Scots then were ought to have been warlike, prompt, and active, liberal in rewarding services, strict in punishing crimes, one whose conduct should make him feared as well as beloved. The qualities of Robert the Third were the reverse of all these. In youth he had indeed seen battles, but, without incurring disgrace, he had never manifested the chivalrous love of war and peril, or the eager desire to distinguish himself by dangerous achievements, which that age expected from all who were of noble birth and had claims to authority.

Besides, his military career was very short. Amidst the tumult of a tournament, the young Earl of Carrick, such was then his title, received a kick from the horse of Sir James Douglas of Dalkeith, in consequence of which he was lame for the rest of his life, and absolutely disabled from taking share either in warfare or in the military sports and tournaments which were its image. As Robert had never testified much predilection for violent exertion, he did not probably much regret the incapacities which exempted him from these active scenes. But his misfortune, or rather its consequences, lowered him in the eyes of a fierce nobility and warlike people. He was obliged to repose the principal charge of his affairs now in one member, now in another, of his family, sometimes with the actual rank, and always with the power, of lieutenant-general of the kingdom. His paternal affection would have induced him to use the assistance of his eldest son, a young man of spirit and talent, whom in fondness he had created Duke of Rothsay,¹ in order to give him the present possession of a dignity next to that of the throne. But the young prince's head was too giddy, and his hand too feeble, to wield with dignity the delegated sceptre. However fond of power, pleasure was the Prince's favourite pursuit, and the court was disturbed, and the country revels practised by him who should have set an example of order and regularity to the youth of the kingdom.

The license and impropriety of the Duke of Rothsay's conduct was the more reprehensible in the public view, that he was a married person, although some, over whom his youth, gaiety, grace, and good temper had obtained influence, were of opinion that an excuse for his libertinism might be found in the circumstances of the marriage itself. They reminded each

¹ See Dukes in Scotland. Note 23

other that his nuptials were entirely conducted by his uncle, the Duke of Albany, by whose counsels the infirm and timid King was much governed at the time, and who had the character of managing the temper of his brother and sovereign, so as might be most injurious to the interests and prospects of the young heir. By Albany's machinations the hand of the heir-apparent was in a manner put up to sale, as it was understood publicly that the nobleman in Scotland who should give the largest dower to his daughter might aspire to raise her to the bed of the Duke of Rothsay.

In the contest for preference which ensued, George Earl of Dunbar and March, who possessed, by himself or his vassals, a great part of the eastern frontier, was preferred to other competitors, and his daughter was, with the mutual good-will of the young couple, actually contracted to the Duke of Rothsay.

But there remained a third party to be consulted, and that was no other than the tremendous Archibald Earl of Douglas, terrible alike from the extent of his lands, from the numerous offices and jurisdictions with which he was invested, and from his personal qualities of wisdom and valour, mingled with indomitable pride, and more than the feudal love of vengeance. The Earl was also nearly related to the throne, having married the eldest daughter of the reigning monarch.

After the espousals of the Duke of Rothsay with the Earl of March's daughter, Douglas, as if he had postponed his share in the negotiation to show that it could not be concluded with any one but himself, entered the lists to break off the contract. He tendered a larger dower with his daughter Marjory than the Earl of March had proffered, and, secured by his own cupidity and fear of the Douglas, Albany exerted his influence with the timid monarch till he was prevailed upon to break the contract with the Earl of March, and wed his son to Marjory Douglas, a woman whom Rothsay could not love. No apology was offered to the Earl of March, excepting that the espousals betwixt the Prince and Elizabeth of Dunbar had not been approved by the States of Parliament, and that till such ratification the contract was liable to be broken off. The Earl deeply resented the wrong done to himself and his daughter, and was generally understood to study revenge, which his great influence on the English frontier was likely to place within his power.

In the meantime, the Duke of Rothsay, incensed at the sacrifice of his hand and his inclinations to this state intrigue,

took his own mode of venting his displeasure, by neglecting his wife, contemning his formidable and dangerous father-in-law, and showing little respect to the authority of the King himself, and none whatever to the remonstrances of Albany, his uncle, whom he looked upon as his confirmed enemy.

Amid these internal dissensions of his family, which extended themselves through his councils and administration, introducing everywhere the baneful effects of uncertainty and disunion, the feeble monarch had for some time been supported by the counsels of his queen, Annabella, a daughter of the noble house of Drummond, gifted with a depth of sagacity and firmness of mind which exercised some restraint over the levities of a son who respected her, and sustained on many occasions the wavering resolution of her royal husband. But after her death the imbecile sovereign resembled nothing so much as a vessel drifted from her anchors, and tossed about amidst contending currents. Abstractedly considered, Robert might be said to doat upon his son, to entertain respect and awe for the character of his brother Albany, so much more decisive than his own, to fear the Douglas with a terror which was almost instinctive, and to suspect the constancy of the bold but fickle Earl of March. But his feelings towards these various characters were so mixed and complicated, that from time to time they showed entirely different from what they really were, and according to the interest which had been last exerted over his flexible mind, the King would change from an indulgent to a strict and even cruel father, from a confiding to a jealous brother, or from a benignant and bountiful to a grasping and encroaching sovereign. Like theameleon, his feeble mind reflected the colour of that firmer character upon which at the time he reposed for counsel and assistance. And when he disused the advice of one of his family, and employed the counsel of another, it was no unwonted thing to see a total change of measures, equally disrespectful to the character of the King and dangerous to the safety of the state.

It followed as a matter of course that the clergy of the Catholic Church acquired influence over a man whose intentions were so excellent, but whose resolutions were so infirm. Robert was haunted, not only with a due sense of the errors he had really committed, but with the tormenting apprehensions of those peccadilloes which beset a superstitious and timid mind. It is scarcely necessary, therefore, to add, that the churchmen of various descriptions had no small influence over this easy-

tempered prince, though, indeed, theirs was, at that period, an influence from which few or none escaped, however resolute and firm of purpose in affairs of a temporal character. We now return from this long digression, without which what we have to relate could not perhaps have been well understood.

The King had moved with ungraceful difficulty to the cushioned chair which, under a state or canopy, stood prepared for his accommodation, and upon which he sank down with enjoyment, like an indolent man, who had been for some time confined to a constrained position. When seated, the gentle and venerable looks of the good old man showed benevolence. The prior, who now remained standing opposite to the royal seat, with an air of deep deference which cloaked the natural haughtiness of his carriage, was a man betwixt forty and fifty years of age, but every one of whose hairs still retained their natural dark colour. Acute features and a penetrating look attested the talents by which the venerable father had acquired his high station in the community over which he presided, and, we may add, in the councils of the kingdom, in whose service they were often exercised. The chief objects which his education and habits taught him to keep in view were the extension of the dominion and the wealth of the church, and the suppression of heresy, both of which he endeavoured to accomplish by all the means which his situation afforded him. But he honoured his religion by the sincerity of his own belief, and by the morality which guided his conduct in all ordinary situations. The faults of the Prior Anselm, though they led him into grievous error, and even cruelty, were perhaps rather those of his age and profession, his virtues were his own.

'These things done,' said the King, 'and the lands I have mentioned secured by my gift to this monastery, you are of opinion, father, that I stand as much in the good graces of our Holy Mother Church as to term myself her dutiful son?'

'Surely, my liege,' said the prior, 'would to God that all her children brought to the efficacious sacrament of confession as deep a sense of their errors, and as much will to make amends for them. But I speak these comforting words, my liege, not to Robert King of Scotland, but only to my humble and devout penitent, Robert Stuart of Carrick.'

'You surprise me, father,' answered the King 'I have little check on my conscience for aught that I have done in my kingly office, seeing that I use therein less mine own opinion than the advice of the most wise counsellors.'

'Even therein lieth the danger, my liege,' replied the prior 'The Holy Father recognises in your Grace, in every thought, word, and action, an obedient vassal of the Holy Church. But there are perverse counsellors, who obey the instinct of their wicked hearts, while they abuse the good-nature and ductility of their monarch, and, under colour of serving his temporal interests, take steps which are prejudicial to those that last to eternity.'

King Robert raised himself upright in his chair, and assumed an air of authority, which, though it well became him, he did not usually display.

'Prior Anselm,' he said, 'if you have discovered anything in my conduct, whether as a king or a private individual, which may call down such censures as your words intimate, it is your duty to speak plainly, and I command you to do so.'

'My liege, you shall be obeyed,' answered the prior, with an inclination of the body. Then raising himself up, and assuming the dignity of his rank in the church, he said, 'Hear from me the words of our Holy Father the Pope, the successor of St Peter, to whom have descended the keys, both to bind and to unloose. "Wherefore, O Robert of Scotland, hast thou not received into the see of St Andrews Henry of Wardlaw, whom the Pontiff hath recommended to fill that see? Why dost thou make profession with thy lips of dutiful service to the Church, when thy actions proclaim the depravity and disobedience of thy inward soul? Obedience is better than sacrifice".'

'Sir prior,' said the monarch, bearing himself in a manner not unbecoming his lofty rank, 'we may well dispense with answering you upon this subject, being a matter which concerns us and the estates of our kingdom, but does not affect our private conscience.'

'Alas,' said the prior, 'and whose conscience will it concern at the last day? Which of your belted lords or wealthy burgesses will then step between their king and the penalty which he has incurred by following of their secular policy in matters ecclesiastical? Know, mighty king, that, were all the chivalry of thy realm drawn up to shield thee from the red levin-bolt, they would be consumed like scorched parchment before the blaze of a furnace.'

'Good father prior,' said the King, on whose timorous conscience this kind of language seldom failed to make an impression, 'you surely argue over-rigidly in this matter. It was

during my last indisposition, while the Earl of Douglas held, as lieutenant general, the regal authority in Scotland, that the obstruction to the reception of the Primate unhappily arose. Do not, therefore, tax me with what happened when I was unable to conduct the affairs of the kingdom, and compelled to delegate my power to another.'

'To your subject, sire, you have said enough,' replied the prior. 'But, if the impediment arose during the lieutenancy of the Earl of Douglas, the legate of his Holiness will demand wherefore it has not been instantly removed, when the King resumed in his royal hands the reins of authority? The Black Douglas can do much—more perhaps than a subject should have power to do in the kingdom of his sovereign, but he cannot stand betwixt your Grace and your own conscience, or release you from the duties to the Holy Church which your situation as a king imposes upon you.'

'Father,' said Robert, somewhat impatiently, 'you are overperemptory in this matter, and ought at least to wait a reasonable season, until we have time to consider of some remedy. Such disputes have happened repeatedly in the reigns of our predecessors, and our royal and blessed ancestor, St. David, did not resign his privileges as a monarch without making a stand in their defence, even though he was involved in arguments with the Holy Father himself.'

'And therein was that great and good king neither holy nor saintly,' said the prior, 'and therefore was he given to be a rout and a spoil to his enemies, when he raised his sword against the banners of St. Peter, and St. Paul, and St. John of Beverley, in the war, as it is still called, of the Standard. Well was it for him that, like his namesake, the son of Jesse, his sin was punished upon earth, and not entered against him at the long and dire day of accounting.'

'Well, good prior—well—enough of this for the present. The Holy See shall, God willing, have no reason to complain of me. I take Our Lady to witness, I would not for the crown I wear take the burden of wronging our Mother Church. We have ever feared that the Earl of Douglas kept his eyes too much fixed on the fame and the temporalities of this frail and passing life to feel altogether as he ought the claims that refer to a future world.'

'It is but lately,' said the prior, 'that he hath taken up forcible quarters in the monastery of Aberbrothock, with his retinue of a thousand followers, and the abbot is compelled to

furnish him with all he needs for horse and man, which the Earl calls exercising the hospitality which he hath a right to expect from the foundation to which his ancestors were contributors. Certain, it were better to return to the Douglas his lands than to submit to such exaction, which more resembles the masterful license of Highland thiggers and sorners¹ than the demeanour of a Christian baron.

‘The Black Douglasses,’ said the King, with a sigh, ‘are a race which will not be said nay. But, father prior, I am myself, it may be, an intruder of this kind, for my sojourning hath been long among you, and my retinue, though far fewer than the Douglas’s, are nevertheless enough to cumber you for their daily maintenance, and though our order is to send out purveyors to lessen your charge as much as may be, yet if there be inconvenience, it were fitting we should remove in time.’

‘Now, Our Lady forbid!’ said the prior, who, if desirous of power, had nothing meanly covetous in his temper, but was even magnificent in his generous kindness, ‘certainly the Dominican convent can afford to her sovereign the hospitality which the house offers to every wanderer of whatever condition, who will receive it at the hands of the poor servants of our patron. No, my royal hege, come with ten times your present train, they shall neither want a grain of oats, a pile of straw, a morsel of bread, nor an ounce of food which our convent can supply them. It is one thing to employ the revenues of the church, which are so much larger than monks ought to need or wish for, in the suitable and dutiful reception of your royal Majesty, and another to have it wrenched from us by the hands of rude and violent men, whose love of rapine is only limited by the extent of their power.’

‘It is well, good prior,’ said the King; ‘and now to turn our thoughts for an instant from state affairs, can thy reverence inform us how the good citizens of Perth have begun their Valentine’s Day? Gallantly, and merrily, and peacefully, I hope.’

‘For gallantry, my hege, I know little of such qualities. For peacefully, there were three or four men, two cruelly wounded, came this morning before daylight to ask the privilege of girth and sanctuary, pursued by a hue and cry of citizens in their shirts, with clubs, bills, Lochaber axes, and two-handed swords, crying “kill and slay,” each louder than another. Nay, they were not satisfied when our porter and

watch told them that those they pursued had taken refuge in the galilee of the church,¹ but continued for some minutes clamouring and striking upon the postern door, demanding that the men who had offended should be delivered up to them. I was afraid their rude noise might have broken your Majesty's rest, and raised some surprise.

'My rest might have been broken,' said the monarch, 'but that sounds of violence should have occasioned surprise—— Alas! reverend father, there is in Scotland only one place where the shriek of the victim and threats of the oppressor are not heard, and that, father, is—the grave.'

The prior stood in respectful silence, sympathising with the feelings of a monarch whose tenderness of heart suited so ill with the condition and manners of his people

'And what became of the fugitives?' asked Robert, after a minute's pause

'Surely, sire,' said the prior, 'they were dismissed, as they desired to be, before daylight, and after we had sent out to be assured that no ambush of their enemies watched them in the vicinity, they went their way in peace.'

'You know nothing,' inquired the King, 'who the men were, or the cause of their taking refuge with you?'

'The cause,' said the prior, 'was a riot with the townsmen, but how arising is not known to us. The custom of our house is to afford twenty-four hours of uninterrupted refuge in the sanctuary of St. Dominic, without asking any question at the poor unfortunates who have sought relief there. If they desire to remain for a longer space, the cause of their resorting to sanctuary must be put upon the register of the convent, and, praised be our holy saint, many persons escape the weight of the law by this temporary protection, whom, did we know the character of their crimes, we might have found ourselves obliged to render up to their pursuers and persecutors.'

As the prior spoke, a dim idea occurred to the monarch, that the privilege of sanctuary thus peremptorily executed must prove a severe interruption to the course of justice through his realm. But he repelled the feeling, as if it had been a suggestion of Satan, and took care that not a single word should escape to betray to the churchman that such a profane thought had ever occupied his bosom, on the contrary, he hastened to change the subject.

'The sun,' he said, 'moves slowly on the index. After the

¹ See Note 25

painful information you have given me, I expected the Lords of my Council ere now, to take order with the ravelled affairs of this unhappy riot. Evil was the fortune which gave me rule over a people among whom it seems to me I am in 'my own person the only man who desires rest and tranquillity'.

'The church always desires peace and tranquillity,' added the prior, not suffering even so general a proposition to escape the poor king's oppressed mind without insisting on a saving clause for the church's honour.

'We meant nothing else,' said Robert. 'But, father prior, you will allow that the church, in quelling strife, as is doubtless her purpose, resembles the busy housewife, who puts in motion the dust which she means to sweep away.'

To this remark the prior would have made some reply, but the door of the apartment was opened, and a gentleman usher announced the Duke of Albany.

CHAPTER X

Gentle friend,
Chide not her mirth, who was sad yesterday,
And may be so to morrow

JOANNA BAILLIE.

THE Duke of Albany was, like his royal brother, named Robert. The Christian name of the latter had been John, until he was called to the throne, when the superstition of the times observed that the name had been connected with misfortune in the lives and reigns of John of England, John of France, and John Baliol of Scotland. It was therefore agreed that, to elude the bad omen, the new king should assume the name of Robert, rendered dear to Scotland by the recollections of Robert Bruce. We mention this to account for the existence of two brothers of the same Christian name in one family, which was not certainly an usual occurrence, more than at the present day.

Albany, also an aged man, was not supposed to be much more disposed for warlike enterprise than the King himself. But if he had not courage, he had wisdom to conceal and cloak over his want of that quality, which, once suspected, would have ruined all the plans which his ambition had formed. He had also pride enough to supply, in extremity, the want of real valour, and command enough over his nerves to conceal their agitation. In other respects, he was experienced in the ways of courts, calm, cool, and crafty, fixing upon the points which he desired to attain, while they were yet far removed, and never losing sight of them, though the winding paths in which he trode might occasionally seem to point to a different direction. In his person he resembled the King, for he was noble and majestic both in stature and countenance. But he had the advantage of his elder brother, in being unencumbered with any infirmity, and in every respect lighter and more active. His dress was rich and grave, as became his age and rank, and, like his royal brother, he wore no arms of any kind, a case of small

knives supplying at his girdle the place usually occupied by a dagger in absence of a sword

At the Duke's entrance the prior, after making an obeisance, respectfully withdrew to a recess in the apartment, at some distance from the royal seat, in order to leave the conversation of the brothers uncontrolled by the presence of a third person. It is necessary to mention, that the recess was formed by a window, placed in the inner front of the monastic buildings, called the palace, from its being the frequent residence of the Kings of Scotland, but which was, unless on such occasions, the residence of the prior or abbot. The window was placed over the principal entrance to the royal apartments, and commanded a view of the internal quadrangle of the convent, formed on the right hand by the length of the magnificent church, on the left by a building containing the range of cellars, with the refectory, chapter-house, and other conventual apartments rising above them, for such existed altogether independent of the space occupied by King Robert and his attendants, while a fourth row of buildings, showing a noble outward front to the rising sun, consisted of a large *hospitium*, for the reception of strangers and pilgrims, and many subordinate offices, warehouses, and places of accommodation, for the ample stores which supplied the magnificent hospitality of the Dominican fathers. A lofty vaulted entrance led through this eastern front into the quadrangle, and was precisely opposite to the window at which Prior Anselm stood, so that he could see underneath the dark arch, and observe the light which gleamed beneath it from the eastern and open portal, but, owing to the height to which he was raised, and the depth of the vaulted archway, his eye could but indistinctly reach the opposite and extended portal. It is necessary to notice these localities

We return to the conversation between the princely relatives. 'My dear brother,' said the King, raising the Duke of Albany, as he stooped to kiss his hand—'my dear, dear brother, wherefore this ceremonial? Are we not both sons of the same Stuart of Scotland and of the same Elizabeth More?'

'I have not forgot that it is so,' said Albany, arising, 'but I must not omit, in the familiarity of the brother, the respect that is due to the king'

'Oh, true—most true, Robin,' answered the King. 'The throne is like a lofty and barren rock, upon which flower or shrub can never take root. All kindly feelings, all tender affec-

tions, are denied to a monarch. A king must not fold a brother to his heart — he dare not give way to fondness for a son.

‘Such, in some respects, is the doom of greatness, sire,’ answered Albany, ‘but Heaven, who removed to some distance from your Majesty’s sphere the members of your own family, has given you a whole people to be your children.’

‘Alas! Robert,’ answered the monarch, ‘your heart is better framed for the duties of a sovereign than mine. I see from the height at which fate has placed me that multitude whom you call my children. I love them, I wish them well, but they are many, and they are distant from me. Alas! even the meanest of them has some beloved being whom he can clasp to his heart, and upon whom he can lavish the fondness of a father. But all that a king can give to a people is a smile, such as the sun bestows on the snowy peaks of the Grampian mountains, as distant and as ineffectual. Alas, Robin! our father used to caress us, and if he chid us it was with a tone of kindness, yet he was a monarch as well as I, and wherefore should not I be permitted, like him, to reclaim my poor prodigal by affection as well as severity?’

‘Had affection never been tried, my liege,’ replied Albany, in the tone of one who delivers sentiments which he grieves to utter, ‘means of gentleness ought assuredly to be first made use of. Your Grace is best judge whether they have been long enough persevered in, and whether those of discouragement and restraint may not prove a more effectual corrective. It is exclusively in your royal power to take what measures with the Duke of Rothsay you think will be most available to his ultimate benefit, and that of the kingdom.’

‘This is unkind, brother,’ said the King, ‘you indicate the painful path which you would have me pursue, yet you offer me not your support in treading it.’

‘My support your Grace may ever command,’ replied Albany, ‘but would it become me, of all men on earth, to prompt to your Grace severe measures against your son and heir? Me, on whom, in case of failure — which Heaven forefend! — of your Grace’s family, this fatal crown might descend? Would it not be thought and said by the fiery March and the haughty Douglas, that Albany had sown dissension between his royal brother and the heir to the Scottish throne, perhaps to clear the way for the succession of his own family? No, my liege, I can sacrifice my life to your service, but I must not place my honour in danger.’

‘You say true, Robin — you say very true,’ replied the King,

hastening to put his own interpretation upon his brother's words 'We must not suffer these powerful and dangerous lords to perceive that there is aught like discord in the royal family That must be avoided of all things, and therefore we will still try indulgent measures, in hopes of correcting the follies of Rothsay I behold sparks of hope in him, Robin, from time to time, that are well worth cherishing He is young — very young — a prince, and in the heyday of his blood. We will have patience with him, like a good rider with a hot-tempered horse Let him exhaust this idle humour, and no one will be better pleased with him than yourself You have censured me in your kindness for being too gentle, too retired, Rothsay has no such defects'

'I will pawn my life he has not,' replied Albany, drily

'And he wants not reflection as well as spirit,' continued the poor king, pleading the cause of his son to his brother 'I have sent for him to attend council to-day, and we shall see how he acquits himself of his devoir You yourself allow, Robin, that the Prince wants neither shrewdness nor capacity for affairs, when he is in the humour to consider them'

'Doubtless, he wants neither, my liege,' replied Albany, 'when he is in the humour to consider them'

'I say so,' answered the King, 'and am heartily glad that you agree with me, Robin, in giving this poor hapless young man another trial. He has no mother now to plead his cause with an incensed father That must be remembered, Albany'

'I trust,' said Albany, 'the course which is most agreeable to your Grace's feelings will also prove the wisest and the best'

The Duke well saw the simple stratagem by which the King was endeavouring to escape from the conclusions of his reasoning, and to adopt, under pretence of his sanction, a course of proceeding the reverse of what it best suited him to recommend. But though he saw he could not guide his brother to the line of conduct he desired, he would not abandon the reins, but resolved to watch for a fitter opportunity of obtaining the sinister advantages to which new quarrels betwixt the King and Prince were soon, he thought, likely to give rise

In the meantime, King Robert, afraid lest his brother should resume the painful subject from which he had just escaped, called aloud to the prior of the Dominicans, 'I hear the trampling of horse Your station commands the courtyard, reverend father Look from the window, and tell us who alights Rothsay, is it not?'

'The noble Earl of March, with his followers,' said the prior
'Is he strongly accompanied?' said the king 'Do his people enter the inner gate?'

At the same moment, Albany whispered the King, 'Fear nothing, the Brandanes¹ of your household are under arms'

The King nodded thanks, while the prior from the window answered the question he had put. 'The Earl is attended by two pages, two gentlemen, and four grooms. One page follows him up the main staircase, bearing his lordship's sword. The others halt in the court, and — *Benedicite*, how is this? Here is a strolling glee-woman, with her viol, preparing to sing beneath the royal windows, and in the cloister of the Dominicans, as she might in the yard of an hostelry! I will have her presently thrust forth.'

'Not so, father,' said the King 'Let me implore grace for the poor wanderer. The joyous science, as they call it, which they profess, mingles sadly with the distresses to which want and calamity condemn a strolling race, and in that they resemble a king, to whom all men cry, "All hail!" while he lacks the homage and obedient affection which the poorest yeoman receives from his family. Let the wanderer remain undisturbed, father, and let her sing if she will to the yeomen and troopers in the court, it will keep them from quarrelling with each other, belonging, as they do, to such unruly and hostile masters.'

So spoke the well meaning and feeble minded prince, and the prior bowed in acquiescence. As he spoke, the Earl of March entered the hall of audience, dressed in the ordinary riding garb of the time, and wearing his poniard. He had left in the ante room the page of honour who carried his sword. The Earl was a well-built, handsome man, fair complexioned, with a considerable profusion of light-coloured hair, and bright blue eyes, which gleamed like those of a falcon. He exhibited in his countenance, otherwise pleasing, the marks of a hasty and irritable temper, which his situation as a high and powerful feudal lord had given him but too many opportunities of indulging.

'I am glad to see you, my Lord of March,' said the King, with a gracious inclination of his person. 'You have been long absent from our councils.'

'My liege,' answered March, with a deep reverence to the King, and a haughty and formal inclination to the Duke of

¹ See Note 26

Albany, 'if I have been absent from your Grace's councils, it is because my place has been supplied by more acceptable, and, I doubt not, able, counsellors. And now I come but to say to your Highness, that the news from the English frontier make it necessary that I should return without delay to my own estates. Your Grace has your wise and politic brother, my Lord of Albany, with whom to consult, and the mighty and warlike Earl of Douglas to carry your counsels into effect. I am of no use save in my own country, and thither, with your Highness's permission, I am purposed instantly to return, to attend my charge, as Warden of the Eastern Marches.'

'You will not deal so unkindly with us, cousin,' replied the gentle monarch. 'Here are evil tidings on the wind. These unhappy Highland clans are again breaking into general commotion, and the tranquillity even of our own court requires the wisest of our council to advise, and the bravest of our barons to execute, what may be resolved upon. The descendant of Thomas Randolph will not surely abandon the grandson of Robert Bruce at such a period as this?'

'I leave with him the descendant of the far-famed James of Douglas,' answered March. 'It is his lordship's boast that he never puts foot in stirrup but a thousand horse mount with him as his daily lifeguard, and I believe the monks of Aberbrothock¹ will swear to the fact. Surely, with all the Douglas's chivalry, they are fitter to restrain a disorderly swarm of Highland kerne than I can be to withstand the archery of England and power of Henry Hotspur? And then, here is his Grace of Albany, so jealous in his care of your Highness's person, that he calls your Brandanes to take arms when a dutiful subject like myself approaches the court with a poor half-score of horse, the retinue of the meanest of the petty barons who own a tower and a thousand acres of barren heath. When such precautions are taken where there is not the slightest chance of peril — since I trust none was to be apprehended from me — your royal person will surely be suitably guarded in real danger.'

'My Lord of March,' said the Duke of Albany, 'the meanest of the barons of whom you speak put their followers in arms even when they receive their dearest and nearest friends within the iron gate of their castle, and, if it please Our Lady, I will not care less for the King's person than they do for their own. The Brandanes are the King's immediate retainers and house-

¹ See Monks of Arbroath and Earl Douglas. Note 27

hold servants, and an hundred of them is but a small guard round his Grace, when yourself, my lord, as well as the Earl of Douglas, often ride with ten times the number'

'My Lord Duke,' replied March, 'when the service of the King requires it, I can ride with ten times as many horse as your Grace has named, but I have never done so either traitorously to entrap the King nor boastfully to overawe other nobles'

'Brother Robert,' said the King, ever anxious to be a peace-maker, 'you do wrong even to intimate a suspicion of my Lord of March. And you, cousin of March, misconstrue my brother's caution. But hark — to divert this angry parley — I hear no unpleasing touch of minstrelsy. You know the gay science, my Lord of March, and love it well. Step to yonder window, beside the holy prior, at whom we make no question touching secular pleasures, and you will tell us if the music and lay be worth listening to. The notes are of France, I think. My brother of Albany's judgment is not worth a cockle shell in such matters, so you, cousin, must report your opinion whether the poor glee maiden deserves recompense. Our son and the Douglas will presently be here, and then, when our council is assembled, we will treat of graver matters'

With something like a smile on his proud brow, March withdrew into the recess of the window, and stood there in silence beside the prior, like one who, while he obeyed the King's command, saw through and despised the timid precaution which it implied, as an attempt to prevent the dispute betwixt Albany and himself. The tune, which was played upon a viol, was gay and sprightly in the commencement, with a touch of the wildness of the troubadour music. But, as it proceeded, the faltering tones of the instrument, and of the female voice which accompanied it, became plaintive and interrupted, as if choked by the painful feelings of the minstrel.

The offended earl, whatever might be his judgment in such matters on which the King had complimented him, paid, it may be supposed, little attention to the music of the female minstrel. His proud heart was struggling between the allegiance he owed his sovereign, as well as the love he still found lurking in his bosom for the person of his well-natured king, and a desire of vengeance arising out of his disappointed ambition, and the disgrace done to him by the substitution of Marjory Douglas to be bride of the heir-apparent, instead of his betrothed daughter. March had the vices and virtues of a hasty and uncertain character, and even now, when he came to bid the King adieu,

with the purpose of renouncing his allegiance as soon as he reached his own feudal territory, he felt unwilling, and almost unable, to resolve upon a step so criminal and so full of peril. It was with such dangerous cogitations that he was occupied during the beginning of the glen- maiden's lay, but objects which called his attention powerfully, as the songstress proceeded, affected the current of his thoughts, and riveted them on what was passing in the courtyard of the monastery. The song was in the Provençal dialect, well understood as the language of poetry in all the courts of Europe, and particularly in Scotland. It was more simply turned, however, than was the general cast of the *serenades*, and rather resembled the *lai* of a Norman minstrel. It may be translated thus.

THE LAY OF POOR LOUISE¹

Ah, poor Louise ! The long day
 She roams from cot to castle gay ;
 And still her voice and viol say,
 Ah, maids, beware the woodland way,
 Think on Louise

Ah, poor Louise ! The sun was high,
 It sunch'd her cheek, it dimm'd her eye.
 The woodland walk was cool and nigh,
 Where birds with chiming streamlets vie
 To cheer Louise

Ah, poor Louise ! The savage bear
 Made ne'er that lovely grove his lair ;
 The wolves molest not paths so fair
 But better far had such been there
 For poor Louise

Ah, poor Louise ! In woody wold
 She met a huntsman fair and bold,
 His baldrick was of silk and gold,
 And many a witching tale he told
 To poor Louise

Ah, poor Louise ! Small cause to pine
 Hadst thou for treasures of the mine,
 For peace of mind, that gift divine,
 And spotless innocence, were thine
 Ah, poor Louise !

Ah, poor Louise ! Thy treasure's reft
 I know not if by force or theft,
 Or part by violence, part by gift,
 But misery is all that's left
 To poor Louise

¹ See Note 28

Let poor Louisa some succour have !
She will not long your bounty crave,
Or tire the gay with warning stave ,
For Heaven has grace, and earth a grave
For poor Louisa.

The song was no sooner finished than, anxious lest the dispute should be revived betwixt his brother and the Earl of March, King Robert called to the latter, 'What think you of the minstrelsy, my lord? Methinks, as I heard it even at this distance, it was a wild and pleasing lay'

'My judgment is not deep, my lord, but the singer may dispense with my approbation, since she seems to have received that of his Grace of Rothsay, the first judge in Scotland.'

'How!' said the King in alarm, 'is my son below?'

'He is sitting on horseback by the glee maiden,' said March, with a malicious smile on his cheek, 'apparently as much interested by her conversation as her music.'

'How is this, father prior?' said the King

But the prior drew back from the lattice. 'I have no will to see, my lord, things which it would pain me to repeat.'

'How is all this?' said the King, who coloured deeply, and seemed about to rise from his chair, but changed his mind, as if unwilling, perhaps, to look upon some unbecoming prank of the wild young prince, which he might not have had heart to punish with necessary severity. The Earl of March seemed to have a pleasure in informing him of that of which doubtless he desired to remain ignorant.

'My liege,' he cried, 'this is better and better. The glee-maiden has not only engaged the ear of the Prince of Scotland, as well as of every groom and trooper in the courtyard, but she has riveted the attention of the Black Douglas, whom we have not known as a passionate admirer of the gay science. But truly, I do not wonder at his astonishment, for the Prince has honoured the fair professor of song and viol with a kiss of approbation.'

'How!' cried the King, 'is David of Rothsay trifling with a glee-maiden, and his wife's father in presence? Go, my good father abbot, call the Prince here instantly. Go, my dearest brother——' And when they had both left the room, the King continued, 'Go, good cousin of March, there will be mischief, I am assured of it. I pray you go, cousin, and second my lord prior's prayers with my commands.'

'You forget, my liege,' said March, with the voice of a deeply-offended person, 'the father of Elizabeth of Dunbar were but an unfit intercessor between the Douglas and his royal son-in-law'

'I crave your pardon, cousin,' said the gentle old man 'I own you have had some wrong; but my Rothsay will be murdered—I must go myself'

But, as he arose precipitately from his chair, the poor king missed a footstep, stumbled, and fell heavily to the ground, in such a manner that, his head striking the corner of the seat from which he had risen, he became for a minute insensible. The sight of the accident at once overcame March's resentment and melted his heart. He ran to the fallen monarch, and replaced him in his seat, using, in the tenderest and most respectful manner, such means as seemed most fit to recall animation.

Robert opened his eyes, and gazed around with uncertainty 'What has happened?—are we alone?—who is with us?'

'Your dutiful subject, March,' replied the Earl

'Alone with the Earl of March!' repeated the King, his still disturbed intellects receiving some alarm from the name of a powerful chief whom he had reason to believe he had mortally offended

'Yes, my gracious liege, with poor George of Dunbar, of whom many have wished your Majesty to think ill, though he will be found truer to your royal person at the last than they will.'

'Indeed, cousin, you have had too much wrong, and believe me, we shall strive to redress——'

'If your Grace thinks so, it may yet be righted,' interrupted the Earl, catching at the hopes which his ambition suggested 'the Prince and Marjory Douglas are nearly related—the dispensation from Rome was informally granted—their marriage cannot be lawful—the Pope, who will do much for so godly a prince, can set aside this unchristian union, in respect of the pre-contract. Bethink you well, my liege,' continued the Earl, kindling with a new train of ambitious thoughts, to which the unexpected opportunity of pleading his cause personally had given rise—'bethink you how you choose betwixt the Douglas and me. He is powerful and mighty, I grant. But George of Dunbar wears the keys of Scotland at his belt, and could bring an English army to the gates of Edinburgh ere Douglas could leave the skirts of Cairntable to oppose them. Your royal son loves my poor deserted girl, and hates the haughty Marjory of

Douglas. Your Grace may judge the small account in which he holds her by his toying with a common glee maiden even in the presence of her father.

The King had hitherto listened to the Earl's argument with the bewildered feelings of a timid horseman, borne away by an impetuous steed, whose course he can neither arrest nor direct. But the last words awakened in his recollection the sense of his son's immediate danger.

'Oh, ay, most true — my son — the Douglas! Oh, my dear cousin, prevent blood, and all shall be as you will. Hark, there is a tumult — that was the clash of arms!'

'By my coronet, by my knightly faith, it is true!' said the Earl, looking from the window upon the inner square of the convent, now filled with armed men and brandished weapons, and resounding with the clash of armour. The deep-vaulted entrance was crowded with warriors at its farthest extremity, and blows seemed to be in the act of being exchanged betwixt some who were endeavouring to shut the gate and others who contended to press in.

'I will go instantly,' said the Earl of March, 'and soon quell this sudden broil. Humbly I pray your Majesty to think on what I have had the boldness to propose.'

'I will — I will, fair cousin,' said the King, scarce knowing to what he pledged himself, 'do but prevent tumult and bloodshed!'

CHAPTER XI

Fair is the damsel, passing fair ,
Sunny at distance gleams her smile ,
Approach — the cloud of woful care
Hangs trembling in her eye the while

Lucinda, a Ballad.

WE must here trace a little more correctly the events which had been indistinctly seen from the window of the royal apartments, and yet more indistinctly reported by those who witnessed them. The glee-maiden, already mentioned, had planted herself where a rise of two large broad steps, giving access to the main gateway of the royal apartments, gained her an advantage of a foot and a half in height over those in the court, of whom she hoped to form an audience. She wore the dress of her calling, which was more gaudy than rich, and showed the person more than did the garb of other females. She had laid aside an upper mantle, and a small basket which contained her slender stock of necessaries, and a little French spaniel dog sat beside them, as their protector. An azure-blue jacket, embroidered with silver, and sitting close to the person, was open in front, and showed several waistcoats of different-coloured silks, calculated to set off the symmetry of the shoulders and bosom, and remaining open at the throat. A small silver chain worn around her neck involved itself amongst these brilliant-coloured waistcoats, and was again produced from them, to display a medal of the same metal, which intimated, in the name of some court or guild of minstrels, the degree she had taken in the gay or joyous science. A small scrip, suspended over her shoulders by a blue silk riband, hung on her left side.

Her sunny complexion, snow-white teeth, brilliant black eyes, and raven locks marked her country lying far in the south of France, and the arch smile and dimpled chin bore the same character. Her luxuriant raven locks, twisted around a

small gold bodkin, were kept in their position by a net of silk and gold. Short petticoats, deep laced with silver, to correspond with the jacket, red stockings which were visible so high as near the calf of the leg, and buskins of Spanish leather, completed her adjustment, which, though far from new, had been saved as an untarnished holiday suit, which much care had kept in good order. She seemed about twenty five years old, but perhaps fatigue and wandering had anticipated the touch of time in obliterating the freshness of early youth.

We have said the glee maiden's manner was lively, and we may add that her smile and repartee were ready. But her gaiety was assumed, as a quality essentially necessary to her trade, of which it was one of the unseries, that the professors were obliged frequently to cover an aching heart with a compelled smile. This seemed to be the case with Louise, who, whether she was actually the heroine of her own song, or whatever other cause she might have for sadness, showed at times a strain of deep melancholy thought, which interfered with and controlled the natural flow of lively spirits which the practice of the joyous science especially required. She lacked also, even in her gayest sallies, the decided boldness and effrontery of her sisterhood, who were seldom at a loss to retort a saucy jest, or turn the laugh against any who interrupted or interfered with them.

It may be here remarked, that it was impossible that this class of women, very numerous in that age, could bear a character generally respectable. They were, however, protected by the manners of the times, and such were the immunities they possessed by the rights of chivalry, that nothing was more rare than to hear of such errant damsels sustaining injury or wrong, and they passed and repassed safely, where armed travellers would probably have encountered a bloody opposition. But though licensed and protected in honour of their tuneful art, the wandering minstrels, male or female, like similar ministers to the public amusement, the itinerant musicians, for instance, and strolling comedians of our own day, led a life too irregular and precarious to be accounted a creditable part of society. Indeed, among the stricter Catholics, the profession was considered as unlawful.

Such was the damsel who, with viol in hand, and stationed on the slight elevation we have mentioned, stepped forward to the bystanders and announced herself as a mistress of the gay science, duly qualified by a brief from a Court of Love and

Music held at Aix, in Provence, under the countenance of the flower of chivalry, the gallant Count Aymer, who now prayed that the cavaliers of merry Scotland, who were known over the wide world for bravery and courtesy, would permit a poor stranger to try whether she could afford them any amusement by her art. The love of song was like the love of light, a common passion of the age, which all at least affected, whether they were actually possessed by it or no, therefore the acquiescence in Louise's proposal was universal. At the same time, an aged, dark-browed monk who was among the bystanders thought it necessary to remind the glee-maiden that, since she was tolerated within these precincts, which was an unusual grace, he trusted nothing would be sung or said inconsistent with the holy character of the place.

The glee-maiden bent her head low, shook her sable locks, and crossed herself reverentially, as if she disclaimed the possibility of such a transgression, and then began the song of 'Poor Louise,' which we gave at length in the last chapter.

Just as she commenced, she was stopped by a cry of 'Room — room — place for the Duke of Rothsay!'

'Nay, hurry no man on my score,' said a gallant young cavalier, who entered on a noble Arabian horse, which he managed with exquisite grace, though by such slight handling of the reins, such imperceptible pressure of the limbs and sway of the body, that to any eye save that of an experienced horseman the animal seemed to be putting forth his paces for his own amusement, and thus gracefully bearing forward a rider who was too indolent to give himself any trouble about the matter.

The Prince's apparel, which was very rich, was put on with slovenly carelessness. His form, though his stature was low, and his limbs extremely slight, was elegant in the extreme, and his features no less handsome. But there was on his brow a haggard paleness, which seemed the effect of care or of dissipation, or of both these wasting causes combined. His eyes were sunk and dim, as from late indulgence in revelry on the preceding evening, while his cheek was inflamed with unnatural red, as if either the effect of the Bacchanalian orgies had not passed away from the constitution, or a morning draught had been resorted to, in order to remove the effects of the night's debauchery.

Such was the Duke of Rothsay, and heir of the Scottish crown, a sight at once of interest and compassion. All unboun-

neted and made way for him, while he kept repeating carelessly, 'No haste — no haste I shall arrive soon enough at the place I am bound for How's this — a damsel of the joyous science? Ay, by St. Giles' and a comely wench to boot Stand still, my merry-men, never was minstrelsy marred for me. A good voice, by the mass! Begin me that lay again, sweetheart.'

Louise did not know the person who addressed her, but the general respect paid by all around, and the easy and indifferent manner in which it was received, showed her she was addressed by a man of the highest quality She recommenced her lay, and sung her best accordingly, while the young duke seemed thoughtful and rather affected towards the close of the ditty But it was not his habit to cherish such melancholy affections 'This is a plaintive ditty, my nut-brown maid,' said he, chuckling the retreating glee-maiden under the chin, and detaining her by the collar of her dress, which was not difficult, as he sat on horseback so close to the steps on which she stood. 'But I warrant me you have livelier notes at will, *ma bella tenebrosa*, ay, and canst sing in bower as well as wold, and by night as well as day'

'I am no nightingale, my lord,' said Louise, endeavouring to escape a species of gallantry which ill suited the place and circumstances — a discrepancy to which he who addressed it to her seemed contemptuously indifferent.

'What hast thou there, darling?' he added, removing his hold from her collar to the scrip which she carried.

Glad was Louise to escape his grasp, by slipping the knot of the riband, and leaving the little bag in the Prince's hand, as, retiring back beyond his reach, she answered, 'Nuts, my lord, of the last season'

The Prince pulled out a handful of nuts accordingly 'Nuts, child! they will break thine ivory teeth, hurt thy pretty voice,' said Rothsay, cracking one with his teeth, like a village school-boy

'They are not the walnuts of my own sunny clime, my lord,' said Louise, 'but they hang low, and are within the reach of the poor'

'You shall have something to afford you better fare, poor wandering ape,' said the Duke, in a tone in which feeling predominated more than in the affected and contemptuous gallantry of his first address to the glee maiden.

At this moment, as he turned to ask an attendant for his purse, the Prince encountered the stern and piercing look of a

tall black man, seated on a powerful iron-grey horse, who had entered the court with attendants while the Duke of Rothsay was engaged with Louise, and now remained stupified and almost turned to stone by his surprise and anger at this unseemly spectacle. Even one who had never seen Archibald Earl of Douglas, called the Grim, must have known him by his swart complexion, his gigantic frame, his buff-coat of bull's-hide, and his air of courage, firmness, and sagacity, mixed with indomitable pride. The loss of an eye in battle, though not perceptible at first sight, as the ball of the injured organ remained similar to the other, gave yet a stern, immovable glare to the whole aspect.

The meeting of the royal son-in-law with his terrible stepfather [father-in-law] was in circumstances which arrested the attention of all present, and the bystanders waited the issue with silence and suppressed breath, lest they should lose any part of what was to ensue.

When the Duke of Rothsay saw the expression which occupied the stern features of Douglas, and remarked that the Earl did not make the least motion towards respectful, or even civil, salutation, he seemed determined to show him how little respect he was disposed to pay to his displeased looks. He took his purse from his chamberlain.

'Here, pretty one,' he said, 'I give thee one gold piece for the song thou hast sung me, another for the nuts I have stolen from thee, and a third for the kiss thou art about to give me. For know, my pretty one, that when fair lips, and thine for fault of better may be called so, make sweet music for my pleasure, I am sworn to St Valentine to press them to mine.'

'My song is recompensed nobly,' said Louise, shrinking back, 'my nuts are sold to a good market, farther traffic, my lord, were neither befitting you nor beseeming me.'

'What! you coy it, my nymph of the highway?' said the Prince, contemptuously. 'Know, damsel, that one asks you a grace who is unused to denial.'

'It is the Prince of Scotland' — 'the Duke of Rothsay,' said the courtiers around, to the terrified Louise, pressing forward the trembling young woman, 'you must not thwart his humour.'

'But I cannot reach your lordship,' she said, timidly, 'you sit so high on horseback.'

'If I must alight,' said Rothsay, 'there shall be the heavier penalty. What does the wench tremble for? Place thy foot on the toe of my boot, give me hold of thy hand. Gallantly

done!' He kissed her as she stood thus suspended in the air, perched upon his foot and supported by his hand, saying, 'There is thy kiss, and there is my purse to pay it, and to grace thee farther, Rothsay will wear thy scrip for the day' He suffered the frightened girl to spring to the ground, and turned his looks from her to bend them contemptuously on the Earl of Douglas, as if he had said, 'All this I do in despite of you and of your daughter's claims'

'By St. Bride of Douglas!' said the Earl, pressing towards the Prince, 'this is too much, unmannered boy, as void of sense as honour! You know what considerations restrain the hand of Douglas, else had you never dared ——'

'Can you play at spang cockle, my lord?' said the Prince, placing a nut on the second joint of his forefinger, and spinning it off by a smart application of the thumb. The nut struck on Douglas's broad breast, who burst out into a dreadful exclamation of wrath, inarticulate, but resembling the growl of a lion in depth and sternness of expression. 'I cry your pardon, most mighty lord,' said the Duke of Rothsay, scornfully, while all around trembled, 'I did not conceive my pellet could have wounded you, seeing you wear a buff-coat. Surely, I trust, it did not hit your eye?'

The prior, despatched by the King, as we have seen in the last chapter, had by this time made way through the crowd, and laying hold on Douglas's rein, in a manner that made it impossible for him to advance, reminded him that the Prince was the son of his sovereign, and the husband of his daughter.

'Fear not, sir prior,' said Douglas. 'I despise the childish boy too much to raise a finger against him. But I will return insult for insult. Here, any of you who love the Douglas, spurn me this quean from the monastery gates, and let her be so scourged that she may bitterly remember to the last day of her life how she gave means to an unrespective boy to affront the Douglas.'

Four or five retainers instantly stepped forth to execute commands which were seldom uttered in vain, and heavily would Louise have atoned for an offence of which she was alike the innocent, unconscious, and unwilling instrument, had not the Duke of Rothsay interfered.

'Spurn the poor glee-woman!' he said, in high indignation, 'scourge her for obeying my commands! Spurn thine own oppressed vassals, rude earl — scourge thine own faulty hounds, but beware how you touch so much as a dog that Rothsay

hath patted on the head, far less a female whose lips he hath kissed !'

Before Douglas could give an answer, which would certainly have been in defiance, there arose that great tumult at the outward gate of the monastery, already noticed, and men both on horseback and on foot began to rush headlong in, not actually fighting with each other, but certainly in no peaceable manner.

One of the contending parties, seemingly, were partizans of Douglas, known by the cognizance of the bloody heart, the other were composed of citizens of the town of Perth. It appeared they had been skirmishing in earnest when without the gates, but, out of respect to the sanctified ground, they lowered their weapons when they entered, and confined their strife to a war of words and mutual abuse.

The tumult had this good effect, that it forced asunder, by the weight and press of numbers, the Prince and Douglas, at a moment when the levity of the former and the pride of the latter were urging both to the utmost extremity. But now peacemakers interfered on all sides. The prior and the monks threw themselves among the multitude, and commanded peace in the name of Heaven, and reverence to their sacred walls, under penalty of excommunication, and their expostulations began to be listened to. Albany, who was despatched by his royal brother at the beginning of the day, had not arrived till now on the scene of action. He instantly applied himself to Douglas, and in his ear conjured him to temper his passion.

'By St Bride of Douglas, I will be avenged !' said the Earl. 'No man shall brook life after he has passed an affront on Douglas.'

'Why, so you may be avenged in fitting time,' said Albany, 'but let it not be said that, like a peevish woman, the Great Douglas could choose neither time nor place for his vengeance. Bethink you, all that we have laboured at is like to be upset by an accident. George of Dunbar hath had the advantage of an audience with the old man, and though it lasted but five minutes, I fear it may endanger the dissolution of your family match, which we brought about with so much difficulty. The authority from Rome has not yet been obtained.'

'A toy !' answered Douglas, haughtily ; 'they dare not dissolve it.'

'Not while Douglas is at large, and in possession of his power,' answered Albany. 'But, noble earl, come with me, and I will show you at what disadvantage you stand.'

Douglas dismounted, and followed his wily accomplice in silence. In a lower hall they saw the ranks of the Brandanes drawn up, well armed in caps of steel and shirts of mail. Their captain, making an obeisance to Albany, seemed to desire to address him.

'What now, MacLouis?' said the Duke

'We are informed the Duke of Rothsay has been insulted, and I can scarce keep the Brandanes within door'

'Gallant MacLouis,' said Albany, 'and you, my trusty Brandanes, the Duke of Rothsay, my princely nephew, is as well as a hopeful gentleman can be. Some scuffle there has been, but all is appeased.' He continued to draw the Earl of Douglas forward. 'You see, my lord,' he said in his ear, 'that, if the word "arrest" was to be once spoken, it would be soon obeyed, and you are aware your attendants are few for resistance.'

Douglas seemed to acquiesce in the necessity of patience for the time. 'If my teeth,' he said, 'should bite through my lips, I will be silent till it is the hour to speak out.'

George of March, in the meanwhile, had a more easy task of pacifying the Prince. 'My Lord of Rothsay,' he said, approaching him with grave ceremony, 'I need not tell you that you owe me something for reparation of honour, though I blame not you personally for the breach of contract which has destroyed the peace of my family. Let me conjure you, by what observance your Highness may owe an injured man, to forego for the present this scandalous dispute'

'My lord, I owe you much,' replied Rothsay, 'but this haughty and all-controlling lord has wounded mine honour'

'My lord, I can but add, your royal father is ill — hath swooned with terror for your Highness's safety'

'Ill' replied the Prince — 'the kind, good old man, swooned, said you, my Lord of March? I am with him in an instant.'

The Duke of Rothsay sprung from his saddle to the ground, and was dashing into the palace like a greyhound, when a feeble grasp was laid on his cloak, and the faint voice of a kneeling female exclaimed, 'Protection, my noble prince! — protection for a helpless stranger!'

'Hands off, stroller!' said the Earl of March, thrusting the suppliant glee maiden aside.

But the gentler prince paused. 'It is true,' he said, 'I have brought the vengeance of an unforgiving devil upon this helpless creature. O Heaven! what a life is mine, so fatal to all who approach me! What to do in the hurry? She must not

go to my apartments And all my men are such born reprobates Ha! thou at mine elbow, honest Harry Smith? What dost thou here?’

‘There has been something of a fight, my lord,’ answered our acquaintance the smith, ‘between the townsmen and the Southland loons who ride with the Douglas, and we have swung them as far as the abbey gate’

‘I am glad of it — I am glad of it And you beat the knaves fairly?’

‘Fairly, does your Highness ask?’ said Henry ‘Why, ay! We were stronger in numbers, to be sure, but no men ride better armed than those who follow the Bloody Heart And so in a sense we beat them fairly, for, as your Highness knows, it is the smith who makes the man-at-arms, and men with good weapons are a match for great odds’

While they thus talked, the Earl of March, who had spoken with some one near the palace gate, returned in anxious haste ‘My Lord Duke! — my Lord Duke! your father is recovered, and if you haste not speedily, my Lord of Albany and the Douglas will have possession of his royal ear’

‘And if my royal father is recovered,’ said the thoughtless Prince, ‘and is holding, or about to hold, counsel with my gracious uncle and the Earl of Douglas, it befits neither your lordship nor me to intrude till we are summoned So there is time for me to speak of my little business with mine honest armourer here’

‘Does your Highness take it so?’ said the Earl, whose sanguine hopes of a change of favour at court had been too hastily excited, and were as speedily checked. ‘Then so let it be for George of Dunbar’

He glided away with a gloomy and displeased aspect, and thus out of the two most powerful noblemen in Scotland, at a time when the aristocracy so closely controlled the throne, the reckless heir-apparent had made two enemies — the one by scornful defiance and the other by careless neglect He heeded not the Earl of March’s departure, however, or rather he felt relieved from his importunity

The Prince went on in indolent conversation with our armourer, whose skill in his art had made him personally known to many of the great lords about the court

‘I had something to say to thee, Smith Canst thou take up a fallen link in my Milan hauberk?’

‘As well, please your Highness, as my mother could take up

a stitch in the nets she wove 'The Milaner shall not know my work from his own.'

'Well, but that was not what I wished of thee just now,' said the Prince, recollecting himself 'this poor glee woman, good Smith, she must be placed in safety 'Thou art man enough to be any woman's champion, and thou must conduct her to some place of safety'

Henry Smith was, as we have seen, sufficiently rash and daring when weapons were in question But he had also the pride of a decent burgher, and was unwilling to place himself in what might be thought equivocal circumstances by the sober part of his fellow citizens

'May it please your Highness,' he said, 'I am but a poor craftsman. But, though my arm and sword are at the King's service and your Highness's, I am, with reverence, no squire of dames. Your Highness will find, among your own retinue, knights and lords willing enough to play Sir Pandarus of 'Troy, it is too knightly a part for poor Hal of the Wynd'

'Umph—hah!' said the Prince 'My purse, Edgar (His attendant whispered him.) 'True—true, I gave it to the poor wench. I know enough of your craft, sir smith, and of craftsmen in general, to be aware that men lure not hawks with empty hands, but I suppose my word may pass for the price of a good armour, and I will pay it thee, with thanks to boot, for this slight service.'

'Your Highness may know other craftsmen,' said the smith, 'but, with reverence, you know not Henry Gow He will obey you in making a weapon, or in wielding one, but he knows nothing of this petticoat service'

'Hark thee, thou Perthshire mule,' said the Prince, yet smiling, while he spoke, at the sturdy punctilio of the honest burgher, 'the wench is as little to me as she is to thee But in an idle moment, as you may learn from those about thee, if thou sawest it not thyself, I did her a passing grace, which is likely to cost the poor wretch her life There is no one here whom I can trust to protect her against the discipline of belt and bow string, with which the Border brutes who follow Douglas will beat her to death, since such is his pleasure.'

'If such be the case, my liege, she has a right to every honest man's protection, and since she wears a petticoat—though I would it were longer and of a less fanciful fashion—I will answer for her protection as well as a single man may But where am I to bestow her?'

'Good faith, I cannot tell,' said the Prince. 'Take her to Sir John Ramorny's lodging. But, no — no — he is ill at ease, and besides, there are reasons, take her to the devil if thou wilt, but place her in safety, and oblige David of Rothsay.'

'My noble Prince,' said the smith, 'I think, always with reverence, that I would rather give a defenceless woman to the care of the devil than of Sir John Ramorny. But though the devil be a worker in fine like myself, yet I know not his haunts, and with aid of Holy Church hope to keep him on terms of defiance. And, moreover, how I am to convey her out of this crowd, or through the streets, in such a mumming habit may be well made a question.'

'For the leaving the convent,' said the Prince, 'this good monk (seizing upon the nearest by his cowl) — Father Nicholas or Boniface —'

'Poor brother Cyprian, at your Highness's command,' said the father.

'Ay — ay, brother Cyprian,' continued the Prince — 'yes Brother Cyprian shall let you out at some secret passage which he knows of, and I will see him again to pay a prince's thanks for it.'

The churchman bowed in acquiescence, and poor Louise, who, during this debate, had looked from the one speaker to the other, hastily said, 'I will not scandalise this good man with my foolish garb. I have a mantle for ordinary wear.'

'Why, there, Smith, thou hast a friar's hood and a woman's mantle to shroud thee under. I would all my frailties were as well shrouded! Farewell, honest fellow, I will thank thee hereafter.'

Then, as if afraid of farther objection on the smith's part, he hastened into the palace.

Henry Gow remained stupified at what had passed, and at finding himself involved in a charge at once inferring much danger and an equal risk of scandal, both which, joined to a principal share which he had taken, with his usual forwardness, in the fray, might, he saw, do him no small injury in the suit he pursued most anxiously. At the same time, to leave a defenceless creature to the ill-usage of the barbarous Galwegians and licentious followers of the Douglas was a thought which his manly heart could not brook for an instant.

He was roused from his reverie by the voice of the monk, who, sliding out his words with the indifference which the holy fathers entertained, or affected, towards all temporal matters,

desired them to follow him. The smith put himself in motion, with a sigh much resembling a groan, and, without appearing exactly connected with the monk's motions, he followed him into a cloister, and through a postern door, which, after looking once behind him, the priest left ajar. Behind them followed Louise, who had hastily assumed her small bundle, and, calling her little four-legged companion, had eagerly followed in the path which opened an escape from what had shortly before seemed a great and inevitable danger.

CHAPTER XII

Then up and spoke the mill-gate wife,
And woe 't but she was grim
' Had e'er your father done the like,
It had been ill for him '

L. C. / 1 r. ball

THE party were now, by a secret passage, admitted within the church, the outward doors of which, usually left open, had been closed against every one in consequence of the recent tumult, when the rioters of both parties had endeavoured to rush into it for other purposes than those of devotion. They traversed the gloomy aisles, whose arched roof resounded to the heavy tread of the armourer, but was silent under the sandalled foot of the monk, and the light step of poor Louise, who trembled excessively, as much from fear as cold. She saw that neither her spiritual nor temporal conductor looked kindly upon her. The former was an austere man, whose aspect seemed to hold the luckless wanderer in some degree of horror, as well as contempt; while the latter, though, as we have seen, one of the best-natured men living, was at present grave to the pitch of sternness, and not a little displeased with having the part he was playing forced upon him, without, as he was constrained to feel, a possibility of his declining it.

His dislike at his task extended itself to the innocent object of his protection, and he internally said to himself, as he surveyed her scornfully, 'A proper queen of beggars to walk the streets of Perth with, and I a decent burgher!' This tawdry minion must have as ragged a reputation as the rest of her sisterhood, and I am finely sped if my chivalry in her behalf comes to Catharine's ears. I had better have slain a man, were he the best in Perth, and, by hammer and nails, I would have done it on provocation, rather than convoy this baggage through the city.'

Perhaps Louise suspected the cause of her conductor's

anxiety, for she said, timidly and with hesitation, 'Worthy sir, were it not better I should stop one instant in that chapel and don my mantle?'

'Umph, sweetheart, well proposed,' said the armourer, but the monk interfered, raising at the same time the finger of interdiction.

'The chapel of holy St. Madox is no tiring-room for jugglers and strollers to shift their trappings in. I will presently show thee a vestiary more suited to thy condition.'

The poor young woman hung down her humbled head, and turned from the chapel door which she had approached with the deep sense of self-abasement. Her little spaniel seemed to gather from his mistress's looks and manner that they were unauthorised intruders on the holy ground which they trode, and hung his ears, and swept the pavement with his tail, as he trotted slowly and close to Louise's heels.

The monk moved on without a pause. They descended a broad flight of steps, and proceeded through a labyrinth of subterranean passages, dimly lighted. As they passed a low-arched door, the monk turned, and said to Louise, with the same stern voice as before — 'There, daughter of folly — there is a robing-room, where many before you have deposited their vestments.'

Obedying the least signal with ready and timorous acquiescence, she pushed the door open, but instantly recoiled with terror. It was a charnel house, half filled with dry skulls and bones.

'I fear to change my dress there, and alone. But if you, father, command it, be it as you will.'

'Why, thou child of vanity, the remains on which thou lookest are but the earthly attire of those who, in their day, led or followed in the pursuit of worldly pleasure. And such shalt thou be, for all thy mincing and ambling, thy piping and thy harping — thou, and all such ministers of frivolous and worldly pleasure, must become like these poor bones, whom thy idle nicety fears and loathes to look upon.'

'Say not with idle nicety, reverend father,' answered the glee maiden, 'for, Heaven knows, I covet the repose of these poor bleached relics, and if, by stretching my body upon them, I could, without sin, bring my state to theirs, I would choose that charnel-heap for my place of rest beyond the fairest and softest couch in Scotland.'

'Be patient, and come on,' said the monk, in a milder tone,

'the reaper must not leave the harvest-work till sunset gives the signal that the day's toil is over'

They walked forward Brother Cyprian, at the end of a long gallery, opened the door of a small apartment, or perhaps a chapel, for it was decorated with a crucifix, before which burned four lamps All bent and crossed themselves, and the priest said to the minstrel maiden, pointing to the crucifix, 'What says that emblem?'

'That HE invites the sinner as well as the righteous to approach'

'Ay, if the sinner put from him his sin,' said the monk, whose tone of voice was evidently milder. 'Prepare thyself here for thy journey'

Louise remained an instant or two in the chapel, and presently reappeared in a mantle of coarse grey cloth, in which she had closely muffled herself, having put such of her more gaudy habiliments as she had time to take off in the little basket which had before held her ordinary attire

The monk presently afterwards unlocked a door which led to the open air They found themselves in the garden which surrounded the monastery of the Dominicans 'The southern gate is on the latch, and through it you can pass unnoticed,' said the monk. 'Bless thee, my son, and bless thee too, unhappy child. Remembering where you put off your idle trinkets, may you take care how you again resume them!'

'Alas, father!' said Louise, 'if the poor foreigner could supply the mere wants of life by any more creditable occupation, she has small wish to profess her idle art But——'

But the monk had vanished, nay, the very door through which she had just passed appeared to have vanished also, so curiously was it concealed beneath a flying buttress, and among the profuse ornaments of Gothic architecture 'Here is a woman let out by this private postern, sure enough,' was Henry's reflection 'Pray Heaven the good fathers never let any in!' The place seems convenient for such games at bo-peep But, *benedicite*, what is to be done next? I must get rid of this quean as fast as I can, and I must see her safe For let her be at heart what she may, she looks too modest, now she is in decent dress, to deserve the usage which the wild Scot of Galloway, or the devil's legion from the Liddel, are like to afford her'

Louise stood as if she waited his pleasure which way to go Her little dog, relieved by the exchange of the dark, sub-

terranean vault for the open air, sprung in wild gambols through the walks, and jumped upon its mistress, and even, though more timidly, circled close round the smith's feet, to express its satisfaction to him also, and conciliate his favour

'Down, Charlot — down!' said the glee-maiden 'You are glad to get into the blessed sunshine, but where shall we rest at night, my poor Charlot?'

'And now, mistress,' said the smith, not churlishly, for it was not in his nature, but bluntly, as one who is desirous to finish a disagreeable employment, 'which way lies your road?'

Louise looked on the ground and was silent. On being again urged to say which way she desired to be conducted, she again looked down, and said she could not tell.

'Come — come,' said Henry, 'I understand all that. I have been a galliard — a reveller in my day, but it's best to be plain. As matters are with me now, I am an altered man for these many, many months, and so, my quean, you and I must part sooner than perhaps a light-o'-love such as you expected to part with — a likely young fellow.'

Louise wept silently, with her eyes still cast on the ground, as one who felt an insult which she had not a right to complain of. At length, perceiving that her conductor was grown impatient, she faltered out, 'Noble sir —'

'Sir is for a knight,' said the impatient burgher, 'and *noble* is for a baron. I am Harry of the Wynd, an honest mechanic, and free of my guild.'

'Good craftsman, then,' said the minstrel woman, 'you judge me harshly, but not without seeming cause. I would relieve you immediately of my company, which, it may be, brings little credit to good men, did I but know which way to go.'

'To the next wake or fair, to be sure,' said Henry, roughly, having no doubt that this distress was affected for the purpose of palming herself upon him, and perhaps dreading to throw himself into the way of temptation, 'and that is the feast of St. Madox, at Auchterarder. I warrant thou wilt find the way thither well enough.'

'Aftir — Auchter —' repeated the glee-maiden, her Southern tongue in vain attempting the Celtic accentuation. 'I am told my poor lays will not be understood if I go nearer to yon dreadful range of mountains.'

'Will you abide, then, in Perth?'

'But where to lodge?' said the wanderer.

'Why, where lodged you last night?' replied the smith.

'You know where you came from, surely, though you seem doubtful where you are going?'

'I slept in the hospital of the convent But I was only admitted upon great importunity, and I was commanded not to return.'

'Nay, they will never take you in with the ban of the Douglas upon you, that is even too true But the Prince mentioned Sir John Ramorny's, I can take you to his lodgings through bye-streets, though it is short of an honest burgher's office, and my time presses'

'I will go anywhere, I know I am a scandal and incumbrance There was a time when it was otherwise. But this Ramorny, who is he?'

'A courtly knight, who lives a jolly bachelor's life, and is master of the horse, and privado, as they say, to the young prince'

'What! to the wild, scornful young man who gave occasion to yonder scandal? Oh, take me not thither, good friend! Is there no Christian woman who would give a poor creature rest in her cowhouse or barn for one night? I will be gone with early daybreak I will repay her richly I have gold, and I will repay you, too, if you will take me where I may be safe from that wild reveller, and from the followers of that dark baron, in whose eye was death.'

'Keep your gold for those who lack it, mistress,' said Henry, 'and do not offer to honest hands the money that is won by violing, and tabouring, and toe-tripping, and perhaps worse pastimes I tell you plainly, mistress, I am not to be fooled I am ready to take you to any place of safety you can name, for my promise is as strong as an iron shackle But you cannot persuade me that you do not know what earth to make for You are not so young in your trade as not to know there are hostelryes in every town, much more in a city like Perth, where such as you may be harboured for your money, if you cannot find some gulls, more or fewer, to pay your lawing If you have money, mistress, my care about you need be the less, and truly I see little but pretence in all that excessive grief, and fear of being left alone, in one of your occupation'

Having thus, as he conceived, signified that he was not to be deceived by the ordinary arts of a glee-maiden, Henry walked a few paces sturdily, endeavouring to think he was doing the wisest and most prudent thing in the world Yet he could not help looking back to see how Louise bore his departure, and

was shocked to observe that she had sunk upon a bank, with her arms resting on her knees and her head on her arms, in a situation expressive of the utmost desolation

The smith tried to harden his heart. 'It is all a sham,' he said 'the gouge knows her trade, I'll be sworn, by St. Rungan'

At the instant something pulled the skirts of his cloak, and, looking round, he saw the little spaniel, who immediately, as if to plead his mistress's cause, got on his hind legs and began to dance, whimpering at the same time, and looking back to Louise, as if to solicit compassion for his forsaken owner

'Poor thing,' said the smith, 'there may be a trick in this too, for thou dost but as thou art taught. Yet, as I promised to protect this poor creature, I must not leave her in a swoon, if it be one, were it but for manhood's sake'

Returning, and approaching his troublesome charge, he was at once assured, from the change of her complexion, either that she was actually in the deepest distress, or had a power of dissimulation beyond the comprehension of man—or woman either

'Young woman,' he said, with more of kindness than he had hitherto been able even to assume, 'I will tell you frankly how I am placed. This is St Valentine's Day, and by custom I was to spend it with my fair Valentine. But blows and quarrels have occupied all the morning, save one poor half-hour. Now, you may well understand where my heart and my thoughts are, and where, were it only in mere courtesy, my body ought to be'

The glee-maiden listened, and appeared to comprehend him. 'If you are a true lover, and have to wait upon a chaste Valentine, God forbid that one like me should make a disturbance between you! Think about me no more. I will ask of that great river to be my guide to where it meets the ocean, where I think they said there was a seaport, I will sail from thence to La Belle France, and will find myself once more in a country in which the roughest peasant would not wrong the poorest female'

'You cannot go to Dundee to-day,' said the smith. 'The Douglas people are in motion on both sides of the river, for the alarm of the morning has reached them ere now, and all this day, and the next, and the whole night which is between, they will gather to their leader's standard, like Highlandmen at the fiery cross. Do you see yonder five or six men who are riding so wildly on the other side of the river? These are Annandale

men I know them by the length of their lances, and by the way they hold them. An Annandale man never slopes his spear backwards, but always keeps the point upright, or pointed forward.'

'And what of them?' said the glee-maiden. 'They are men-at-arms and soldiers. They would respect me for my viol and my helplessness.'

'I will say them no scandal,' answered the smith. 'If you were in their own glens, they would use you hospitably, and you would have nothing to fear, but they are now on an expedition. All is fish that comes to their net. There are amongst them who would take your life for the value of your gold earrings. Their whole soul is settled in their eyes to see prey, and in their hands to grasp it. They have no ears either to hear lays of music or listen to prayers for mercy. Besides, their leader's order is gone forth concerning you, and it is of a kind sure to be obeyed. Ay, great lords are sooner listened to if they say, "Burn a church," than if they say, "Build one".'

'Then,' said the glee-woman, 'I were best sit down and die.'

'Do not say so,' replied the smith. 'If I could but get you a lodging for the night, I would carry you the next morning to Our Lady's Stairs, from whence the vessels go down the river for Dundee, and would put you on board with some one bound that way, who should see you safely lodged where you would have fair entertainment and kind usage.'

'Good—excellent—generous man!' said the glee-maiden, 'do this, and if the prayers and blessings of a poor unfortunate should ever reach Heaven, they will rise thither in thy behalf. We will meet at yonder postern door, at whatever time the boats take their departure.'

'That is at six in the morning, when the day is but young.'

'Away with you, then, to your Valentine, and if she loves you, oh, deceive her not!'

'Alas, poor damsel! I fear it is deceit hath brought thee to this pass. But I must not leave you thus unprovided. I must know where you are to pass the night.'

'Care not for that,' replied Louise. 'the heavens are clear—there are bushes and boskets enough by the river-side—Charlot and I can well make a sleeping-room of a green arbour for one night; and to-morrow will, with your promised aid, see me out of reach of injury and wrong. Oh, the night soon passes away when there is hope for to-morrow! Do you still linger, with your Valentine waiting for you? Nay, I shall hold

you but a loitering lover, and you know what belongs to a minstrel's reproaches.'

'I cannot leave you, damsel,' answered the armourer, now completely melted. 'It were mere murder to suffer you to pass the night exposed to the keenness of a Scottish blast in February. No—no, my word would be ill kept in this manner, and if I should incur some risk of blame, it is but just penance for thinking of thee, and using thee, more according to my own prejudices, as I now well believe, than thy merits. Come with me, damsel, thou shalt have a sure and honest lodging for the night, whatsoever may be the consequence. It would be an evil compliment to my Catharine, were I to leave a poor creature to be starved to death, that I might enjoy her company an hour sooner.'

So saying, and hardening himself against all anticipations of the ill consequences or scandal which might arise from such a measure, the manly hearted smith resolved to set evil report at defiance, and give the wanderer a night's refuge in his own house. It must be added, that he did this with extreme reluctance, and in a sort of enthusiasm of benevolence.

Ere our stout son of Vulcan had fixed his worship on the Fair Maid of Perth, a certain natural wildness of disposition had placed him under the influence of Venus, as well as that of Mars, and it was only the effect of a sincere attachment which had withdrawn him entirely from such licentious pleasures. He was therefore justly jealous of his newly acquired reputation for constancy, which his conduct to this poor wanderer must expose to suspicion, a little doubtful, perhaps, of exposing himself too venturously to temptation, and moreover in despair to lose so much of St. Valentine's Day, which custom not only permitted, but enjoined, him to pass beside his mate for the season. The journey to Kinfauns, and the various transactions which followed, had consumed the day, and it was now nearly evensong time.

As if to make up by a speedy pace for the time he was compelled to waste upon a subject so foreign to that which he had most at heart, he strode on through the Dominicans' gardens, entered the town, and casting his cloak around the lower part of his face, and pulling down his bonnet to conceal the upper, he continued the same celerity of movement through bye streets and lanes, hoping to reach his own house in the Wynd without being observed. But when he had continued his rate of walking for ten minutes, he began to be sensible it might be too

rapid for the young woman to keep up with him. He accordingly looked behind him with a degree of angry impatience, which soon turned into compunction, when he saw that she was almost utterly exhausted by the speed which she had exerted.

'Now, marry, hang me up for a brute,' said Henry to himself. 'Was my own haste ever so great, could it give that poor creature wings? And she loaded with baggage too! I am an ill-nurtured beast, that is certain, wherever women are in question, and always sure to do wrong when I have the best will to act right. Hark thee, damsel, let me carry these things for thee. We shall make better speed that I do so.'

Poor Louise would have objected, but her breath was too much exhausted to express herself, and she permitted her good-natured guardian to take her little basket, which, when the dog beheld, he came straight before Henry, stood up, and shook his fore-paws, whining gently, as if he too wanted to be carried.

'Nay, then, I must needs lend thee a lift too,' said the smith, who saw the creature was tired.

'Fie, Charlot!' said Louise, 'thou knowest I will carry thee myself.'

She endeavoured to take up the little spaniel, but it escaped from her, and going to the other side of the smith, renewed its supplication that he would take it up.

'Charlot's right,' said the smith. 'he knows best who is ablest to bear him. This lets me know, my pretty one, that you have not been always the bearer of your own mail. Charlot can tell tales.'

So deadly a hue came across the poor glee-maiden's countenance as Henry spoke, that he was obliged to support her, lest she should have dropped to the ground. She recovered again, however, in an instant or two, and with a feeble voice requested her guide would go on.

'Nay — nay,' said Henry, as they began to move, 'keep hold of my cloak, or my arm, if it helps you forward better. A fair sight we are, and had I but a rebeck or a guitar at my back, and a jackanapes on my shoulder, we should seem as joyous a brace of strollers as ever touched string at a castle gate. 'Snails!' he ejaculated internally, 'were any neighbour to meet me with this little harlotry's basket at my back, her dog under my arm, and herself hanging on my cloak, what could they think but that I had turned mumper in good earnest? I would not for the best harness I ever laid hammer on, that any

of our long tongued neighbours met me in this guise, it were a jest would last from St. Valentine's Day to next Candlemas'

Starred by these thoughts, the smith, although at the risk of making much longer a route which he wished to traverse as swiftly as possible, took the most indirect and private course which he could find, in order to avoid the main streets, still crowded with people, owing to the late scene of tumult and agitation. But unhappily his policy availed him nothing, for, in turning into an alley, he met a man with his cloak muffled around his face, from a desire like his own to pass unobserved, though the slight insignificant figure, the spindle shanks, which showed themselves beneath the mantle, and the small dull eye that blinked over its upper folds, announced the pottingar as distinctly as if he had carried his sign in front of his bonnet. His unexpected and most unwelcome presence overwhelmed the smith with confusion. Ready evasion was not the property of his bold, blunt temper, and knowing this man to be a curious observer, a malignant tale-bearer, and by no means well disposed to himself in particular, no better hope occurred to him than that the worshipful apothecary would give him some pretext to silence his testimony and secure his discretion by twisting his neck round.

But, far from doing or saying anything which could warrant such extremities, the pottingar, seeing himself so close upon his stalwart townsman that recognition was inevitable, seemed determined it should be as slight as possible, and without appearing to notice anything particular in the company or circumstances in which they met, he barely slid out these words as he passed him, without even a glance towards his companion after the first instant of their meeting—'A merry holiday to you once more, stout smith. What! thou art bringing thy cousin, pretty Mistress Joan Letham, with her mail, from the water-side—fresh from Dundee, I warrant? I heard she was expected at the old cordwainer's'

As he spoke thus, he looked neither right nor left, and exchanging a 'Save you!' with a salute of the same kind which the smith rather muttered than uttered distinctly, he glided forward on his way like a shadow

'The foul fiend catch me, if I can swallow that pill,' said Henry Smith, 'how well soever it may be gilded. The knave has a shrewd eye for a kirtle, and knows a wild duck from a tame as well as e'er a man in Perth. He were the last in the Fair City to take sour plums for pears, or my roundabout

cousin Joan for this piece of fantastic vanity I fancy his bearing was as much as to say, "I will not see what you might wish me blind to", and he is right to do so, as he might easily purchase himself a broken pate by meddling with my matters, and so he will be silent for his own sake But whom have we next? By St Dunstan, the chattering, bragging, cowardly knave, Oliver Proudpute!

It was, indeed, the bold bonnet-maker whom they next encountered, who, with his cap on one side, and trolling the ditty of

'Thou art over long at the pot, Tom, Tom,'

gave plain intimation that he had made no dry meal.

'Ha! my jolly smith,' he said, 'have I caught thee in the manner? What, can the true steel bend? Can Vulcan, as the minstrel says, pay Venus back in her own coin? Faith, thou wilt be a gay Valentine before the year's out, that begins with the holiday so jollily'

'Harkye, Oliver,' said the displeased smith, 'shut your eyes and pass on, crony And harkye again, stir not your tongue about what concerns you not, as you value having an entire tooth in your head.'

'I betray counsel? I bear tales, and that against my brother martialist? I scorn it, I would not tell it even to my timber soldan! Why, I can be a wild galliard in a corner as well as thou, man And now I think on't, I will go with thee somewhere, and we will have a rouse together, and thy Dalilah shall give us a song Ha! said I not well?'

'Excellent,' said Henry, longing the whole time to knock his brother martialist down, but wisely taking a more peaceful way to rid himself of the incumbrance of his presence — 'excellently well! I may want thy help, too, for here are five or six of the Douglasses before us they will not fail to try to take the wench from a poor burgher like myself, so I will be glad of the assistance of a tearer such as thou art'

'I thank ye — I thank ye,' answered the bonnet-maker, 'but were I not better run and cause ring the common bell, and get my great sword?'

'Ay — ay, run home as fast as you can, and say nothing of what you have seen.'

'Who, I? Nay, fear me not Pah! I scorn a tale-bearer'

'Away with you, then I hear the clash of armour'

This put life and mettle into the heels of the bonnet-maker,

who, turning his back on the supposed danger, set off at a pace which the smith never doubted would speedily bring him to his own house.

'Here is another chattering jay to deal with,' thought the smith, 'but I have a hank over him too. The minstrels have a *fabliau* of a daw with borrowed feathers — why, this Oliver is the very bird, and, by St Dunstan, if he lets his chattering tongue run on at my expense, I will so pluck him as never hawk plumed a partridge. And this he knows.'

As these reflections thronged on his mind, he had nearly reached the end of his journey, and, with the glee-maiden still hanging on his cloak, exhausted, partly with fear, partly with fatigue, he at length arrived at the middle of the wynd, which was honoured with his own habitation, and from which, in the uncertainty that then attended the application of surnames, he derived one of his own appellatives. Here, on ordinary days, his furnace was seen to blaze, and four half-stripped knaves stunned the neighbourhood with the clang of hammer and stithy. But St. Valentine's holiday was an excuse for these men of steel having shut the shop, and for the present being absent on their own errands of devotion or pleasure. The house which adjoined to the smithy called Henry its owner, and though it was small, and situated in a narrow street, yet, as there was a large garden with fruit-trees behind it, it constituted upon the whole a pleasant dwelling. The smith, instead of knocking or calling, which would have drawn neighbours to doors and windows, drew out a pass-key of his own fabrication, then a great and envied curiosity, and opening the door of his house, introduced his companion into his habitation.

The apartment which received Henry and the glee-maiden was the kitchen, which served amongst those of the smith's station for the family sitting-room, although one or two individuals, like Simon Glover, had an eating room apart from that in which their victuals were prepared. In the corner of this apartment, which was arranged with an unusual attention to cleanliness, sat an old woman, whose neatness of attire, and the precision with which her scarlet plaid was drawn over her head, so as to descend to her shoulders on each side, might have indicated a higher rank than that of Luckie Shoolbred, the smith's housekeeper. Yet such and no other was her designation, and not having attended mass in the morning, she was quietly reposing herself by the side of the fire, her beads, half told, hanging over her left arm, her prayers, half

said, loitering upon her tongue, her eyes, half closed, resigning themselves to slumber, while she expected the return of her foster-son, without being able to guess at what hour it was likely to happen. She started up at the sound of his entrance, and bent her eye upon his companion, at first with a look of the utmost surprise, which gradually was exchanged for one expressive of great displeasure.

'Now the saints bless mine eyesight, Henry Smith!' she exclaimed, very devoutly.

'Amen, with all my heart. Get some food ready presently, good nurse, for I fear me this traveller hath dined but lightly.'

'And again I pray that Our Lady would preserve my eyesight from the wicked delusions of Satan!'

'So be it, I tell you, good woman. But what is the use of all this pattering and praying? Do you not hear me? or will you not do as I bid you?'

'It must be himself, then, whatever is of it! But oh! it is more like the foul fiend in his likeness, to have such a baggage hanging upon his cloak. O Harry Smith, men called you a wild lad for less things; but who would ever have thought that Harry would have brought a light leman under the roof that sheltered his worthy mother, and where his own nurse has dwelt for thirty years?'

'Hold your peace, old woman, and be reasonable,' said the smith. 'This glee-woman is no leman of mine, nor of any other person that I know of, but she is going off for Dundee to-morrow by the boats, and we must give her quarters till then.'

'Quarters!' said the old woman. 'You may give quarters to such cattle if you like it yourself, Harry Wynd; but the same house shall not quarter that trumpery quean and me, and of that you may assure yourself.'

'Your mother is angry with me,' said Louise, misconstruing the connexion of the parties. 'I will not remain to give her any offence. If there is a stable or a cowhouse, an empty stall will be bed enough for Charlot and me.'

'Ay—ay, I am thinking it is the quarters you are best used to,' said Dame Shoolbred.

'Harkye, Nurse Shoolbred,' said the smith. 'You know I love you for your own sake and for my mother's; but by St Dunstan, who was a saint of my own craft, I will have the command of my own house; and if you leave me without any better reason but your own nonsensical suspicions, you must

think how you will have the door open to you when you return, for you shall have no help of mine, I promise you'

'Aweel, my bairn, and that will never make me risk the honest name I have kept for sixty years. It was never your mother's custom, and it shall never be mine, to take up with ranters, and jugglers, and singing women, and I am not so far to seek for a dwelling, that the same roof should cover me and a tramping princess like that.'

With this the refractory gouvernante began in great hurry to adjust her tartan mantle for going abroad, by pulling it so far forwards as to conceal the white linen cap, the edges of which bordered her shrivelled but still fresh and healthful countenance. This done, she seized upon a staff, the trusty companion of her journeys, and was fairly trudging towards the door, when the smith stepped between her and the passage.

'Wait at least, old woman, till we have cleared scores I owe you for fee and bountith'

'An' that's e'en a dream of your own fool's head. What fee or bountith am I to take from the son of your mother, that fed, clad, and bielded me as if I had been a sister?'

'And well you repay it, nurse, leaving her only child at his utmost need'

This seemed to strike the obstinate old woman with compunction. She stopped and looked at her master and the minstrel alternately, then shook her head, and seemed about to resume her motion towards the door.

'I only receive this poor wanderer under my roof,' urged the smith, 'to save her from the prison and the scourge.'

'And why should you save her?' said the inexorable Dame Shoolbred. 'I daresay she has deserved them both as well as ever thief deserved a hempen collar'

'For aught I know she may or she may not. But she cannot deserve to be scourged to death, or imprisoned till she is starved to death, and that is the lot of them that the Black Douglas bears mal talent against.'

'And you are going to thraw the Black Douglas for the sake of a glee woman? This will be the worst of your feuds yet. Oh, Henry Gow, there is as much iron in your head as in your anvil!'

'I have sometimes thought this myself, Mistress Shoolbred, but if I do get a cut or two on this new argument, I wonder who is to cure them, if you run away from me like a scared wild goose? Ay, and, moreover, who is to receive

my bonny bride, that I hope to bring up the wynd one of these days?’

‘Ah, Harry — Harry,’ said the old woman, shaking her head, ‘this is not the way to prepare an honest man’s house for a young bride — you should be guided by modesty and discretion, and not by chambering and wantonness.’

‘I tell you again, this poor creature is nothing to me — I wish her only to be safely taken care of, and I think the boldest Borderman in Perth will respect the bar of my door as much as the gate of Carlisle Castle. I am going down to Sim Glover’s, I may stay there all night, for the Highland cub is run back to the hills, like a wolf-whelp as he is, and so there is a bed to spare, and father Simon will make me welcome to the use of it. You will remain with this poor creature, feed her, and protect her during the night, and I will call on her before day, and thou mayst go with her to the boat thyself an thou wilt, and so thou wilt set the last eyes on her at the same time I shall.’

‘There is some reason in that,’ said Dame Shoolbred, ‘though why you should put your reputation in risk for a creature that would find a lodging for a silver twopence and less matter is a mystery to me.’

‘Trust me with that, old woman, and be kind to the girl.’

‘Kinder than she deserves, I warrant you, and truly, though I little like the company of such cattle, yet I think I am less like to take harm from her than you — unless she be a witch, indeed, which may well come to be the case, as the devil is very powerful with all this wayfaring clanjamfray.’

‘No more a witch than I am a warlock,’ said the honest smith — ‘a poor, broken-hearted thing, that, if she hath done evil, has dreed a sore weird for it. Be kind to her. And you, my musical damsel, I will call on you to-morrow morning, and carry you to the water-side. This old woman will treat you kindly if you say nothing to her but what becomes honest ears.’

The poor minstrel had listened to this dialogue without understanding more than its general tendency, for, though she spoke English well, she had acquired the language in England itself, and the Northern dialect was then, as now, of a broader and harsher character. She saw, however, that she was to remain with the old lady, and meekly folding her arms on her bosom, bent her head with humility. She next looked towards the smith with a strong expression of thankfulness,

CHAPTER XIII

How in the noon of night that pibroch thrills,
Savage and shrill ! But with the breath which fills
Their mountain pipe, so fill the mountaineers
With the fierce native daring which instils
The stirring memory of a thousand years.

BYRON.

WE must now leave the lower parties in our historical drama, to attend to the incidents which took place among those of a higher rank and greater importance.

We pass from the hut of an armourer to the council-room of a monarch, and resume our story just when, the tumult beneath being settled, the angry chieftains were summoned to the royal presence. They entered, displeased with and lowering upon each other, each so exclusively filled with his own fancied injuries as to be equally unwilling and unable to attend to reason or argument. Albany alone, calm and crafty, seemed prepared to use their dissatisfaction for his own purposes, and turn each incident as it should occur to the furtherance of his own indirect ends.

The King's irresolution, although it amounted even to timidity, did not prevent his assuming the exterior bearing becoming his situation. It was only when hard pressed, as in the preceding scene, that he lost his apparent composure. In general, he might be driven from his purpose, but seldom from his dignity of manner. He received Albany, Douglas, March, and the prior, those ill-assorted members of his motley council, with a mixture of courtesy and loftiness, which reminded each haughty peer that he stood in the presence of his sovereign, and compelled him to do the befitting reverence.

Having received their salutations, the King motioned them to be seated, and they were obeying his commands when Rothsay entered. He walked gracefully up to his father, and, kneeling at his footstool, requested his blessing. Robert, with

an aspect in which fondness and sorrow were ill disguised, made an attempt to assume a look of reproof, as he laid his hand on the youth's head and said, with a sigh, 'God bless thee, my thoughtless boy, and make thee a wiser man in thy future years!'

'Amen, my dearest father!' said Rothsay, in a tone of feeling such as his happier moments often evinced. He then kissed the royal hand, with the reverence of a son and a subject, and, instead of taking a place at the council board, remained standing behind the King's chair, in such a position that he might, when he chose, whisper into his father's ear.

The King next made a sign to the prior of St. Dominic to take his place at the table, on which there were writing-materials, which, of all the subjects present, Albany excepted, the churchman was alone able to use¹. The King then opened the purpose of their meeting by saying, with much dignity—

'Our business, my lords, respected these unhappy dissensions in the Highlands, which, we learn by our latest messengers, are about to occasion the waste and destruction of the country, even within a few miles of this our own court. But, near as this trouble is, our ill fate, and the instigations of wicked men, have raised up one yet nearer, by throwing strife and contention among the citizens of Perth and those attendants who follow your lordships and others our knights and nobles. I must first, therefore, apply to yourselves, my lords, to know why our court is disturbed by such unseemly contentings, and by what means they ought to be repressed? Brother of Albany, do you tell us first your sentiments on this matter.'

'Sir, our royal sovereign and brother,' said the Duke, 'being in attendance on your Grace's person when the fray began, I am not acquainted with its origin.'

'And for me,' said the Prince, 'I heard no worse war cry than a minstrel wench's ballad, and saw no more dangerous bolts flying than hazel nuts.'

'And I,' said the Earl of March, 'could only perceive that the stout citizens of Perth had in chase some knaves who had assumed the Bloody Heart on their shoulders. They ran too fast to be actually the men of the Earl of Douglas.'

Douglas understood the sneer, but only replied to it by one of those withering looks with which he was accustomed to inti-

¹ See Rothsay's Character Note 29

mate his mortal resentment. He spoke, however, with haughty composure

‘My liege,’ he said, ‘must of course know it is Douglas who must answer to this heavy charge, for when was there strife or blood-shed in Scotland, but there were foul tongues to asperse a Douglas or a Douglas’s man as having given cause to them? We have here goodly witnesses. I speak not of my Lord of Albany, who has only said that he was, as well becomes him, by your Grace’s side. And I say nothing of my Lord of Rothsay, who, as befits his rank, years, and understanding, was cracking nuts with a strolling musician. He smiles. Here he may say his pleasure, I shall not forget a tie which he seems to have forgotten. But here is my Lord of March, who saw my followers flying before the clowns of Perth. I can tell that earl that the followers of the Bloody Heart advance or retreat when their chieftain commands and the good of Scotland requires.’

‘And I can answer ——,’ exclaimed the equally proud Earl of March, his blood rushing into his face, when the King interrupted him.

‘Peace! angry lords,’ said the King, ‘and remember in whose presence you stand. And you, my Lord of Douglas, tell us, if you can, the cause of this mutiny, and why your followers, whose general good services we are most willing to acknowledge, were thus active in private brawl.’

‘I obey, my lord,’ said Douglas, slightly stooping a head that seldom bent. ‘I was passing from my lodgings in the Canthusian convent, through the High Street of Perth, with a few of my ordinary retinue, when I beheld some of the baser sort of citizens crowding around the Cross, against which there was nailed this placard, and that which accompanies it.’

He took from a pocket in the bosom of his buff-coat a human hand and a piece of parchment. The King was shocked and agitated.

‘Read,’ he said, ‘good father prior, and let that ghastly spectacle be removed.’

The prior read a placard to the following purpose —

‘Inasmuch as the house of a citizen of Perth was assaulted last night, being St. Valentine’s Eve, by a sort of disorderly night-walkers, belonging to some company of the strangers now resident in the Fair City, and whereas this hand was struck from one of the lawless limmers in the fray that ensued, the provost and magistrates have directed that it should be

nailed to the Cross, in scorn and contempt of those by whom such brawl was occasioned. And if any one of knightly degree shall say that this our act is wrongfully done, I, Patrick Charteris of Kinfauns, knight, will justify this cartel in knightly weapons, within the barrace; or, if any one of meaner birth shall deny what is here said, he shall be met with by a citizen of the Fair City of Perth, according to his degree. And so God and St. John protect the Fair City !'

'You will not wonder, my lord,' resumed Douglas, 'that, when my almoner had read to me the contents of so insolent a scroll, I caused one of my squires to pluck down a trophy so disgraceful to the chivalry and nobility of Scotland. Whereupon, it seems some of these saucy burghers took license to hoot and insult the hindmost of my train, who wheeled their horses on them, and would soon have settled the feud, but for my positive command that they should follow me in as much peace as the rascally vulgar would permit. And thus they arrived here in the guise of flying men, when, with my command to repel force by force, they might have set fire to the four corners of this wretched borough, and stifled the insolent churls, like malicious fox-cubs in a burning brake of furze.'

There was a silence when Douglas had done speaking, until the Duke of Rothsay answered, addressing his father —

'Since the Earl of Douglas possesses the power of burning the town where your Grace holds your court, so soon as the provost and he differ about a night riot, or the terms of a cartel, I am sure we ought all to be thankful that he has not the will to do so.'

'The Duke of Rothsay,' said Douglas, who seemed resolved to maintain command of his temper, 'may have reason to thank Heaven in a more serious tone than he now uses that the Douglas is as true as he is powerful. This is a time when the subjects in all countries rise against the law — we have heard of the insurgents of the Jacquerie in France, and of Jack Straw, and Hob Miller, and Parson Ball, among the Southron, and we may be sure there is fuel enough to catch such a flame, were it spreading to our frontiers. When I see peasants challenging noblemen, and nailing the hands of the gentry to their city cross, I will not say I *fear* mutiny — for that would be false — but I foresee, and will stand well prepared for, it.'

'And why does my Lord Douglas say,' answered the Earl of March, 'that this cartel has been done by churls? I see Sir Patrick Charteris's name there, and he, I ween, is of no churl's

blood The Douglas himself, since he takes the matter so warmly, might lift Sir Patrick's gauntlet without soiling of his honour'

'My Lord of March,' replied Douglas, 'should speak but of what he understands I do no injustice to the descendant of the Red Rover, when I say he is too slight to be weighed with the Douglas The heir of Thomas Randolph might have a better claim to his answer'

'And, by my honour, it shall not miss for want of my asking the grace,' said the Earl of March, pulling his glove off.

'Stay, my lord,' said the King. 'Do us not so gross an injury as to bring your feud to mortal defiance here; but rather offer your ungloved hand in kindness to the noble earl, and embrace in token of your mutual fealty to the crown of Scotland.'

'Not so, my liege,' answered March, 'your Majesty may command me to return my gauntlet, for that and all the armour it belongs to are at your command, while I continue to hold my earldom of the crown of Scotland, but when I clasp Douglas, it must be with a mailed hand. Farewell, my liege My counsels here avail not, nay, are so unfavourably received, that perhaps farther stay were unwholesome for my safety. May God keep your Highness from open enemies and treacherous friends! I am for my castle of Dunbar, from whence I think you will soon hear news Farewell to you, my Lords of Albany and Douglas, you are playing a high game, look you play it fairly. Farewell, poor thoughtless prince, who art sporting like a fawn within spring of a tiger' Farewell, all—George of Dunbar sees the evil he cannot remedy. Adieu, all.'

The King would have spoken, but the accents died on his tongue, as he received from Albany a look cautioning him to forbear. The Earl of March left the apartment, receiving the mute salutations of the members of the council whom he had severally addressed, excepting from Douglas alone, who returned to his farewell speech a glance of contemptuous defiance

'The recreant goes to betray us to the Southron,' he said, 'his pride rests on his possessing that sea-worn hold¹ which can admit the English into Lothian. Nay, look not alarmed, my liege, I will hold good what I say. Nevertheless, it is yet time. Speak but the word, my liege—say but "Arrest him," and March shall not yet cross the Earn on his traitorous journey'

'Nay, gallant earl,' said Albany, who wished rather that the two powerful lords should counterbalance each other than that one should obtain a decisive superiority, 'that were too

¹ The castle of Dunbar

hasty counsel. The Earl of March came hither on the King's warrant of safe conduct, and it may not consist with my royal brother's honour to break it. Yet, if your lordship can bring any detailed proof ——

Here they were interrupted by a flourish of trumpets

'His Grace of Albany is unwontedly scrupulous to day,' said Douglas, 'but it skills not wasting words — the time is past — these are March's trumpets, and I warrant me he rides at flight-speed so soon as he passes the South Port. We shall hear of him in time, and if it be as I have conjectured, he shall be met with though all England backed his treachery'

'Nay, let us hope better of the noble earl,' said the King, no way displeased that the quarrel betwixt March and Douglas had seemed to obliterate the traces of the disagreement betwixt Rothsay and his father-in-law, 'he hath a fiery, but not a sullen, temper. In some things he has been — I will not say wronged, but disappointed — and something is to be allowed to the resentment of high blood armed with great power. But, thank Heaven, all of us who remain are of one sentiment, and, I may say, of one house, so that, at least, our councils cannot now be thwarted with disunion. Father prior, I pray you take your writing-materials, for you must as usual be our clerk of council. And now to business, my lords, and our first object of consideration must be this Highland umber'

'Between the Clan Chattan and the Clan Quhele,' said the prior, 'which, as our last advices from our brethren at Dunkeld inform us, is ready to break out into a more formidable warfare than has yet taken place between these sons of Belial, who speak of nothing else than of utterly destroying one another. Their forces are assembling on each side, and not a man claiming in the tenth degree of kindred but must repair to the brattach¹ of his tribe, or stand to the punishment of fire and sword. The fiery cross hath flitted about like a meteor in every direction, and awakened strange and unknown tribes beyond the distant Moray Firth — may Heaven and St. Dominic be our protection! But if your lordships cannot find remedy for evil, it will spread broad and wide, and the patrimony of the church must in every direction be exposed to the fury of these Amalekites, with whom there is as little devotion to Heaven as there is pity or love to their neighbour — may Our Lady be our guard! We hear some of them are yet utter heathens, and worship Mahound and Termagaunt.'

¹ See Note 30

'My lords and kinsmen,' said Robert, 'ye have heard the urgency of this case, and may desire to know my sentiments before you deliver what your own wisdom shall suggest. And, in sooth, no better remedy occurs to me than to send two commissioners, with full power from us to settle such debates as be among them, and at the same time to charge them, as they shall be answerable to the law, to lay down their arms, and forbear all practices of violence against each other.'

'I approve of your Grace's proposal,' said Rothsay; 'and I trust the good prior will not refuse the venerable station of envoy upon this peacemaking errand. And his reverend brother, the abbot of the Carthusian convent, must contend for an honour which will certainly add two most eminent recruits to the large army of martyrs, since the Highlanders little regard the distinction betwixt clerk and layman in the ambassadors whom you send to them.'

'My royal Lord of Rothsay,' said the prior, 'if I am destined to the blessed crown of martyrdom, I shall be doubtless directed to the path by which I am to attain it. Meantime, if you speak in jest, may Heaven pardon you, and give you light to perceive that it were better buckle on your arms to guard the possessions of the church, so perilously endangered, than to employ your wit in taunting her ministers and servants.'

'I taunt no one, father prior,' said the youth, yawning, 'nor have I much objection to taking arms, excepting that they are a somewhat cumbrous garb, and in February a furred mantle is more suiting to the weather than a steel corslet. And it irks me the more to put on cold harness in this nipping weather, that, would but the church send a detachment of their saints — and they have some Highland ones well known in this district, and doubtless used to the climate — they might fight their own battles, like merry St George of England. But I know not how it is, we hear of their miracles when they are propitiated, and of their vengeance if any one trespasses on their patrimonies, and these are urged as reasons for extending their lands by large largesses, and yet, if there come down but a band of twenty Highlanders, bell, book, and candle make no speed, and the belted baron must be fain to maintain the church in possession of the lands which he has given to her, as much as if he himself still enjoyed the fruits of them.'

'Son David,' said the King, 'you give an undue license to your tongue.'

'Nay, sir, I am mute,' replied the Prince. 'I had no pur

pose to disturb your Highness, or displease the father prior, who, with so many miracles at his disposal, will not face, as it seems, a handful of Highland caterans.'

'We know,' said the prior, with suppressed indignation, 'from what source these vile doctrines are derived, which we hear with horror from the tongue that now utters them. When princes converse with heretics, their minds and manners are alike corrupted. They show themselves in the streets as the companions of maskers and harlots, and in the council as the scornors of the church and of holy things.'

'Peace, good father!' said the King, 'Rothsay shall make amends for what he has idly spoken. Alas! let us take counsel in friendly fashion, rather than resemble a mutinous crew of mariners in a sinking vessel, when each is more intent on quarrelling with his neighbours than in assisting the exertions of the forlorn master for the safety of the ship. My Lord of Douglas, your house has been seldom to lack when the crown of Scotland desired either wise counsel or manly achievement, I trust you will help us in this strait.'

'I can only wonder that the strait should exist, my lord,' answered the haughty Douglas. 'When I was entrusted with the lieutenancy of the kingdom, there were some of these wild clans came down from the Grampians. I troubled not the council about the matter, but made the sheriff, Lord Ruthven, get to horse with the forces of the Carse — the Hays, the Lindsays, the Ogilvies, and other gentlemen. By St. Bride! when it was steel coat to frieze mantle, the thieves knew what lances were good for, and whether swords had edges or no. There were some three hundred of their best bonnets, besides that of their chief, Donald Cormac,¹ left on the moor of Thorn and in Rochinroy Wood, and as many were gibbeted at Houghmanstares,² which has still the name from the hangman work that was done there. This is the way men deal with thieves in my country, and if gentler methods will succeed better with these Earish knaves, do not blame Douglas for speaking his mind. You smile, my Lord of Rothsay. May I ask how I have a second time become your jest, before I have replied to the first which you passed on me?'

'Nay, be not wrathful, my good Lord of Douglas,' answered the Prince, 'I did but smile to think how your princely retinue would dwindle if every thief were dealt with as the poor Highlanders at Houghmanstares.'

¹ Some authorities place this skirmish so late as 1443

² See Note 57

The King again interfered, to prevent the Earl from giving an angry reply. 'Your lordship,' said he to Douglas, 'advises wisely that we should trust to arms when these men come out against our subjects on the fair and level plain, but the difficulty is to put a stop to their disorders while they continue to lurk within their mountains. I need not tell you that the Clan Chattan and the Clan Quhele are great confederacies, consisting each of various tribes, who are banded together, each to support their own separate league, and who of late have had dissensions which have drawn blood wherever they have met, whether individually or in bands. The whole country is torn to pieces by their restless feuds.'

'I cannot see the evil of this,' said the Douglas. 'the ruffians will destroy each other, and the deer of the Highlands will increase as the men diminish. We shall gain as hunters the exercise we lose as warriors.'

'Rather say that the wolves will increase as the men diminish,' replied the King.

'I am content,' said Douglas. 'better wild wolves than wild caterans. Let there be strong forces maintained along the Earlish frontier, to separate the quiet from the disturbed country. Confine the fire of civil war within the Highlands, let it spend its uncontrolled fury, and it will be soon burnt out for want of fuel. The survivors will be humbled, and will be more obedient to a whisper of your Grace's pleasure than their fathers, or the knaves that now exist, have been to your strictest commands.'

'This is wise but ungodly counsel,' said the prior, shaking his head, 'I cannot take it upon my conscience to recommend it. It is wisdom, but it is the wisdom of Achitophel, crafty at once and cruel.'

'My heart tells me so,' said the King, laying his hand on his breast—'my heart tells me that it will be asked of me at the awful day, "Robert Stuart, where are the subjects I have given thee?" it tells me that I must account for them all, Saxon and Gael, Lowland, Highland, and Border man, that I will not be required to answer for those alone who have wealth and knowledge, but for those also who were robbers because they were poor, and rebels because they were ignorant.'

'Your Highness speaks like a Christian king,' said the prior, 'but you bear the sword as well as the sceptre, and this present evil is of a kind which the sword must cure.'

'Harkye, my lords,' said the Prince, looking up as if a gay

thought had suddenly struck him. 'Suppose we teach these savage mountaineers a strain of chivalry? It were no hard matter to bring these two great commanders, the captam of the Clan Chattan and the chief of the no less doughty race of the Clan Quhele, to defy each other to mortal combat. They might fight here in Perth—we would lend them horse and armour, thus their feud would be stanch'd by the death of one, or probably both, of the villains, for I think both would break their necks in the first charge, my father's godly desire of saving blood would be attained, and we should have the pleasure of seeing such a combat between two salvage knights, for the first time in their lives wearing breeches and mounted on horses, as has not been heard of since the days of King Arthur.'

'Shame upon you, David!' said the King. 'Do you make the distress of your native country, and the perplexity of our councils, a subject for buffoonery?'

'If you will pardon me, royal brother,' said Albany, 'I think that, though my princely nephew hath started this thought in a jocular manner, there may be something wrought out of it, which might greatly remedy this pressing evil.'

'Good brother,' replied the King, 'it is unkind to expose Rothsay's folly by pressing further his ill-timed jest. We know the Highland clans have not our customs of chivalry, nor the habit or mode of doing battle which these require.'

'True, your Grace,' answered Albany, 'yet I speak not in scorn, but in serious earnest. True, the mountaineers have not our forms and mode of doing battle in the lists, but they have those which are as effectual to the destruction of human life, and so that the mortal game is played, and the stake won and lost, what signifies it whether these Gael fight with sword and lance, as becomes belted knights, or with sand-bags, like the crestless churls of England, or butcher each other with knives and skenes, in their own barbarous fashion? Their habits, like our own, refer all disputed rights and claims to the decision of battle. They are as vain, too, as they are fierce, and the idea that these two clans would be admitted to combat in presence of your Grace and of your court will readily induce them to refer their difference to the fate of battle, even were such rough arbitrement less familiar to their customs, and that in any such numbers as shall be thought most convenient. We must take care that they approach not the court, save in such a fashion and number that they shall not be able to surprise

us ; and that point being provided against, the more that shall be admitted to combat upon either side, the greater will be the slaughter among their bravest and most stirring men, and the more the chance of the Highlands being quiet for some time to come.'

'This were a bloody policy, brother,' said the King, 'and again I say, that I cannot bring my conscience to countenance the slaughter of these rude men, that are so little better than so many benighted heathens'

'And are their lives more precious,' asked Albany, 'than those of nobles and gentlemen who by your Grace's license are so frequently admitted to fight in barrace, either for the satisfying of disputes at law or simply to acquire honour?'

The King, thus hard pressed, had little to say against a custom so engrafted upon the laws of the realm and the usages of chivalry as the trial by combat, and he only replied, 'God knows, I have never granted such license as you urge me with unless with the greatest repugnance, and that I never saw men have strife together to the effusion of blood, but I could have wished to appease it with the shedding of my own'

'But, my gracious lord,' said the prior, 'it seems that, if we follow not some such policy as this of my Lord of Albany, we must have recourse to that of the Douglas, and, at the risk of the dubious event of battle, and with the certainty of losing many excellent subjects, do, by means of the Lowland swords, that which these wild mountaineers will otherwise perform with their own hand. What says my Lord of Douglas to the policy of his Grace of Albany?'

'Douglas,' said the haughty lord, 'never counselled that to be done by policy which might be attained by open force. He remains by his opinion, and is willing to march at the head of his own followers, with those of the barons of Perthshire and the Carse, and either bring these Highlanders to reason or subjection, or leave the body of a Douglas among their savage wildernesses'

'It is nobly spoken, my Lord of Douglas,' said Albany, 'and well might the King rely upon thy undaunted heart and the courage of thy resolute followers. But see you not how soon you may be called elsewhere, where your presence and services are altogether indispensable to Scotland and her monarch? Marked you not the gloomy tone in which the fiery March limited his allegiance and faith to our sovereign here present to that space for which he was to remain King Robert's vassal?'

And did not you yourself suspect that he was plotting a transference of his allegiance to England? Other chiefs, of subordinate power and inferior fame, may do battle with the Highlanders, but if Dunbar admit the Percies and their Englishmen into our frontiers, who will drive them back if the Douglas be elsewhere?'

'My sword,' answered Douglas, 'is equally at the service of his Majesty on the frontier or in the deepest recesses of the Highlands. I have seen the backs of the proud Percy and George of Dunbar ere now, and I may see them again. And, if it is the King's pleasure I should take measures against this probable conjunction of stranger and traitor, I admit that, rather than trust to an inferior or feebler hand the important task of settling the Highlands, I would be disposed to give my opinion in favour of the policy of my Lord of Albany, and suffer those savages to carve each other's limbs, without giving barons and knights the trouble of hunting them down'

'My Lord of Douglas,' said the Prince, who seemed determined to omit no opportunity to gall his haughty father-in-law, 'does not choose to leave to us Lowlanders even the poor crumbs of honour which might be gathered at the expense of the Highland kerne, while he, with his Border chivalry, reaps the full harvest of victory over the English. But Percy hath seen men's backs as well as Douglas, and I have known as great wonders as that he who goes forth to seek such wool should come back shorn'

'A phrase,' said Douglas, 'well becoming a prince who speaks of honour with a wandering harlot's scrip in his bonnet, by way of favour'

'Excuse it, my lord,' said Rothsay 'men who have matched unfittingly become careless in the choice of those whom they love *par amours*. The chained dog must snatch at the nearest bone.'

'Rothsay, my unhappy son!' exclaimed the King, 'art thou mad? or wouldst thou draw down on thee the full storm of a king and father's displeasure?'

'I am dumb,' returned the Prince, 'at your Grace's command.'

'Well, then, my Lord of Albany,' said the King, 'since such is your advice, and since Scottish blood must flow, how, I pray you, are we to prevail on these fierce men to refer their quarrel to such a combat as you propose?'

'That, my liege,' said Albany, 'must be the result of more mature deliberation. But the task will not be difficult. Gold will be needful to bribe some of the bards and principal counsellors and spokesmen. The chiefs, moreover, of both

these leagues must be made to understand that, unless they agree to this amicable settlement ——

'*Amicable*, brother!' said the King, with emphasis.

'Ay, amicable, my liege,' replied his brother, 'since it is better the country were placed in peace, at the expense of losing a score or two of Highland kernes, than remain at war till as many thousands are destroyed by sword, fire, famine, and all the extremities of mountain battle. To return to the purpose I think that the first party to whom the accommodation is proposed will snatch at it eagerly, that the other will be ashamed to reject an offer to rest the cause on the swords of their bravest men, that the national vanity, and factious hate to each other, will prevent them from seeing our purpose in adopting such a rule of decision, and that they will be more eager to cut each other to pieces than we can be to halloo them on. And now, as our counsels are finished, so far as I can aid, I will withdraw.'

'Stay yet a moment,' said the prior, 'for I also have a grief to disclose, of a nature so black and horrible, that your Grace's pious heart will hardly credit its existence, and I state it mournfully, because, as certain as that I am an unworthy servant of St Dominic, it is the cause of the displeasure of Heaven against this poor country, by which our victories are turned into defeat, our gladness into mourning, our councils distracted with disunion, and our country devoured by civil war.'

'Speak, reverend prior,' said the King; 'assuredly, if the cause of such evils be in me or in my house, I will take instant care to their removal.'

He uttered these words with a faltering voice, and eagerly waited for the prior's reply, in the dread, no doubt, that it might implicate Rothsay in some new charge of folly or vice. His apprehensions perhaps deceived him, when he thought he saw the churchman's eye rest for a moment on the Prince, before he said, in a solemn tone, 'Heresy, my noble and gracious liege — heresy is among us. She snatches soul after soul from the congregation, as wolves steal lambs from the sheepfold.'

'There are enough of shepherds to watch the fold,' answered the Duke of Rothsay. 'Here are four convents of regular monks alone around this poor hamlet of Perth, and all the secular clergy besides. Methinks a town so well garrisoned should be fit to keep out an enemy.'

'One traitor in a garrison, my lord,' answered the prior, 'can do much to destroy the security of a city which is guarded by legions; and if that one traitor is, either from levity, or love of

novelty, or whatever other motive, protected and fostered by those who should be most eager to expel him from the fortress, his opportunities of working mischief will be incalculably increased.

'Your words seem to aim at some one in this presence, father prior,' said the Douglas, 'if at me, they do me foul wrong. I am well aware that the abbot of Aberbrothock hath made some ill advised complaints, that I suffered not his beeves to become too many for his pastures, or his stock of grain to burst the gurnels of the monastery, while my followers lacked beef and their horses corn. But bethink you, the pastures and cornfields which produced that plenty were bestowed by my ancestors on the house of Aberbrothock, surely not with the purpose that their descendant should starve in the midst of it, and neither will he, by St. Bride! But for heresy and false doctrine,' he added, striking his large hand heavily on the council table, 'who is it that dare tax the Douglas? I would not have poor men burned for silly thoughts, but my hand and sword are ever ready to maintain the Christian faith.'

'My lord, I doubt it not,' said the prior, 'so hath it ever been with your most noble house. For the abbot's complaints, they may pass to a second day. But what we now desire is a commission to some noble lord of state, joined to others of Holy Church, to support by strength of hand, if necessary, the inquiries which the reverend official of the bounds, and other grave prelates, my unworthy self being one, are about to make into the cause of the new doctrines, which are now deluding the simple, and depraving the pure and precious faith, approved by the Holy Father and his reverend predecessors.'

'Let the Earl of Douglas have a royal commission to this effect,' said Albany, 'and let there be no exception whatever from his jurisdiction, saving the royal person. For my own part, although conscious that I have neither in act nor thought received or encouraged a doctrine which Holy Church hath not sanctioned, yet I should blush to claim an immunity under the blood royal of Scotland, lest I should seem to be seeking refuge against a crime so horrible.'

'I will have nought to do with it,' said Douglas 'to march against the English, and the Southron traitor March, is task enough for me. Moreover, I am a true Scotsman, and will not give way to aught that may put the Church of Scotland's head farther into the Roman yoke, or make the baron's coronet stoop to the mitre and cowl. Do you, therefore, most noble Duke of

Albany, place your own name in the commission, and I pray your Grace so to mitigate the zeal of the men of Holy Church who may be associated with you, that there be no over-zealous dealings, for the smell of a lagot on the Tay would bring back the Douglas from the walls of York.'

The Duke hastened to give the Earl assurance that the commission should be exercised with lenity and moderation.

'Without a question,' said King Robert, 'the commission must be ample, and did it consist with the dignity of our crown, we would not ourselves decline its jurisdiction. But we trust that, while the thunders of the church are directed against the vile authors of these detestable heresies, there shall be measures of mildness and compassion taken with the unfortunate victims of their delusions.'

'Such is ever the course of Holy Church, my lord,' said the prior of St Dominic's

'Why, then, let the commission be expedited with due care, in name of our brother Albany, and such others as shall be deemed convenient,' said the King. 'And now once again let us break up our council, and, Rothsay, come thou with me, and lend me thine arm, I have matter for thy private ear.'

'Ho, la!' here exclaimed the Prince, in the tone in which he would have addressed a managed horse

'What means this rudeness, boy?' said the King, 'wilt thou never learn reason and courtesy?'

'Let me not be thought to offend, my liege,' said the Prince, 'but we are parting without learning what is to be done in the passing strange adventure of the dead hand, which the Douglas hath so gallantly taken up. We shall sit but uncomfortably here at Perth, if we are at variance with the citizens.'

'Leave that to me,' said Albany. 'With some little grant of lands and money, and plenty of fair words, the burghers may be satisfied for this time, but it were well that the barons and their followers, who are in attendance on the court, were warned to respect the peace within burgh.'

'Surely, we would have it so,' said the King; 'let strict orders be given accordingly.'

'It is doing the churls but too much grace,' said the Douglas, 'but be it at your Highness's pleasure. I take leave to retire.'

'Not before you taste a flagon of Gascon wine, my lord?' said the King

'Pardon,' replied the Earl, 'I am not athirst, and I drink

not for fashion, but either for need or for friendship' So saying, he departed.

The King, as if relieved by his absence, turned to Albany, and said, 'And now, my lord, we should chide this truant Rothsay of ours, yet he hath served us so well at council, that we must receive his merits as some atonement for his follies.'

'I am happy to hear it,' answered Albany, with a countenance of pity and incredulity, as if he knew nothing of the supposed services.

'Nay, brother, you are dull,' said the King, 'for I will not think you envious. Did you not note that Rothsay was the first to suggest the mode of settling the Highlands, which your experience brought indeed into better shape, and which was generally approved of, and even now we had broken up, leaving a main matter unconsidered, but that he put us in mind of the affray with the citizens?'

'I nothing doubt, my liege,' said the Duke of Albany, with the acquiescence which he saw was expected, 'that my royal nephew will soon emulate his father's wisdom.'

'Or,' said the Duke of Rothsay, 'I may find it easier to borrow from another member of my family that happy and comfortable cloak of hypocrisy which covers all vices, and then it signifies little whether they exist or not.'

'My lord prior,' said the Duke, addressing the Dominican, 'we will for a moment pray your reverence's absence. The King and I have that to say to the Prince which must have no further audience, not even yours.'

The Dominican bowed and withdrew

When the two royal brothers and the Prince were left together, the King seemed in the highest degree embarrassed and distressed, Albany sullen and thoughtful, while Rothsay himself endeavoured to cover some anxiety under his usual appearance of levity. There was a silence of a minute. At length Albany spoke.

'Royal brother,' he said, 'my princely nephew entertains with so much suspicion any admonition coming from my mouth, that I must pray your Grace yourself to take the trouble of telling him what it is most fitting he should know'

'It must be some displeasing communication indeed, which my Lord of Albany cannot wrap up in honied words,' said the Prince.

'Peace with thine effrontery, boy,' answered the King, passionately. 'You asked but now of the quarrel with the citizens. Who caused that quarrel, David? What men were

those who scaled the window of a peaceful citizen and liege-man, alarmed the night with torch and outcry, and subjected our subjects to danger and affright !'

'More fear than danger, I fancy,' answered the Prince, 'but how can I of all men tell who made this nocturnal disturbance !'

'There was a follower of thine own there,' continued the King — 'a man of Belial, whom I will have brought to condign punishment.'

'I have no follower, to my knowledge, capable of deserving your Highness's displeasure,' answered the Prince

'I will have no evasions, boy. Where wert thou on St. Valentine's Eve ?'

'It is to be hoped that I was serving the good saint, as a man of mould might,' answered the young man, carelessly.

'Will my royal nephew tell us how his master of the horse was employed upon that holy eve !' said the Duke of Albany

'Speak, David ; I command thee to speak,' said the King.

'Ramorny was employed in my service, I think that answer may satisfy my uncle'

'But it will not satisfy *me*,' said the angry father 'God knows, I never coveted man's blood, but that Ramorny's head I will have, if law can give it. He has been the encourager and partaker of all thy numerous vices and follies. I will take care he shall be so no more. Call MacLouis, with a guard'

'Do not injure an innocent man,' interposed the Prince, desirous at every sacrifice to preserve his favourite from the menaced danger. 'I pledge my word that Ramorny was employed in business of mine, therefore could not be engaged in this brawl'

'False equivocator that thou art !' said the King, presenting to the Prince a ring, 'behold the signet of Ramorny, lost in the infamous affray !' It fell into the hands of a follower of the Douglas, and was given by the Earl to my brother. Speak not for Ramorny, for he dies, and go thou from my presence, and repent the flagitious counsels which could make thee stand before me with a falsehood in thy mouth. Oh, shame, David — shame ! as a son thou hast lied to thy father, as a knight to the head of thy order'

The Prince stood mute, conscience-struck, and self-convicted. He then gave way to the honourable feelings which at bottom he really possessed, and threw himself at his father's feet

'The false knight,' he said, 'deserves degradation, the disloyal subject death, but, oh ! let the son crave from the father

pardon for the servant who did not lead him into guilt, but who reluctantly plunged himself into it at his command. Let me bear the weight of my own folly, but spare those who have been my tools rather than my accomplices. Remember, Ramorny was preferred to my service by my sainted mother.'

'Name her not, David, I charge thee,' said the King, 'she is happy that she never saw the child of her love stand before her doubly dishonoured by guilt and by falsehood.'

'I am indeed unworthy to name her,' said the Prince, 'and yet, my dear father, in her name I must petition for Ramorny's life.'

'If I might offer my counsel,' said the Duke of Albany, who saw that a reconciliation would soon take place betwixt the father and son, 'I would advise that Ramorny be dismissed from the Prince's household and society, with such further penalty as his imprudence may seem to merit. The public will be contented with his disgrace, and the matter will be easily accommodated or stifled, so that his Highness do not attempt to screen his servant.'

'Wilt thou, for my sake, David,' said the King, with a faltering voice and the tear in his eye, 'dismiss this dangerous man? — for my sake, who could not refuse thee the heart out of my bosom?'

'It shall be done, my father — done instantly,' the Prince replied, and seizing the pen, he wrote a hasty dismissal of Ramorny from his service, and put it into Albany's hands. 'I would I could fulfil all your wishes as easily, my royal father,' he added, again throwing himself at the King's feet, who raised him up and fondly folded him in his arms.

Albany scowled, but was silent, and it was not till after the space of a minute or two that he said, 'This matter being so happily accommodated, let me ask if your Majesty is pleased to attend the evensong service in the chapel?'

'Surely,' said the King. 'Have I not thanks to pay to God, who has restored union to my family? You will go with us, brother?'

'So please your Grace to give me leave of absence — no,' said the Duke. 'I must concert with the Douglas and others the manner in which we may bring these Highland vultures to our lure.'

Albany retired to think over his ambitious projects, while the father and son attended divine service, to thank God for their happy reconciliation.

CHAPTER XIV

Will you go to the Hielands, Lizzy Lyndesay,
Will you go to the Hielands wi' me?
Will you go to the Hielands, Lizzy Lyndesay,
My bride and my darling to be?

Old Ballad.

A FORMER chapter opened in the royal confessional; we are now to introduce our readers to a situation somewhat similar, though the scene and persons were very different. Instead of a Gothic and darkened apartment in a monastery, one of the most beautiful prospects in Scotland lay extended beneath the hill of Kinnoul, and at the foot of a rock which commanded the view in every direction sat the Fair Maid of Perth, listening in an attitude of devout attention to the instructions of a Carthusian monk, in his white gown and scapular, who concluded his discourse with prayer, in which his proselyte devoutly joined.

When they had finished their devotions, the priest sat for some time with his eyes fixed on the glorious prospect, of which even the early and chilly season could not conceal the beauties, and it was some time ere he addressed his attentive companion.

'When I behold,' he said at length, 'this rich and varied land, with its castles, churches, convents, stately palaces, and fertile fields, these extensive woods, and that noble river, I know not, my daughter, whether most to admire the bounty of God or the ingratitude of man. He hath given us the beauty and fertility of the earth, and we have made the scene of his bounty a charnel-house and a battle-field.' He hath given us power over the elements, and skill to erect houses for comfort and defence, and we have converted them into dens for robbers and ruffians.'

'Yet, surely, my father, there is room for comfort,' replied Catharine, 'even in the very prospect we look upon. Yonder four goodly convents, with their churches, and their towers,



FATHER CLEMENT AND CATHERINE
From a painting by W E Lockhart, R.S A

which tell the citizens with brazen voice that they should think on their religious duties, their inhabitants, who have separated themselves from the world, its pursuits and its pleasures, to dedicate themselves to the service of Heaven—all bear witness that, if Scotland be a bloody and a sinful land, she is yet alive and sensible to the claims which religion demands of the human race.'

'Verily, daughter,' answered the priest, 'what you say seems truth, and yet, nearly viewed, too much of the comfort you describe will be found delusive. It is true, there was a period in the Christian world when good men, maintaining themselves by the work of their hands, assembled together, not that they might live easily or sleep softly, but that they might strengthen each other in the Christian faith, and qualify themselves to be teachers of the Word to the people. Doubtless there are still such to be found in the holy edifices on which we now look. But it is to be feared that the love of many has waxed cold. Our churchmen have become wealthy, as well by the gifts of pious persons as by the bribes which wicked men have given in their ignorance, imagining that they can purchase that pardon by endowments to the church which Heaven has only offered to sincere penitents. And thus, as the church waxeth rich, her doctrines have unhappily become dim and obscure, as a light is less seen if placed in a lamp of chased gold than beheld through a screen of glass. God knows, if I see these things and mark them, it is from no wish of singularity or desire to make myself a teacher in Israel, but because the fire burns in my bosom, and will not permit me to be silent. I obey the rules of my order, and withdraw not myself from its austerities. Be they essential to our salvation, or be they mere formalities, adopted to supply the want of real penitence and sincere devotion, I have promised, nay, vowed, to observe them, and they shall be respected by me the more, that otherwise I might be charged with regarding my bodily ease, when Heaven is my witness how lightly I value what I may be called on to act or suffer, if the purity of the church could be restored, or the discipline of the priesthood replaced in its primitive simplicity.'

'But, my father,' said Catharine, 'even for these opinions men term you a Lollard and a Wickliffite, and say it is your desire to destroy churches and cloisters, and restore the religion of heathenness.'

'Even so, my daughter, am I driven to seek refuge in hills and rocks, and must be presently contented to take my flight

amongst the rude Highlanders, who are thus far in a more gracious state than those I leave behind me, that theirs are crimes of ignorance, not of presumption. I will not omit to take such means of safety and escape from their cruelty as Heaven may open to me, for, while such appear, I shall account it a sign that I have still a service to accomplish. But when it is my master's pleasure, He knows how willingly Clement Blair will lay down a vilified life upon earth, in humble hope of a blessed exchange hereafter. But wherefore dost thou look northward so anxiously, my child? Thy young eyes are quicker than mine—dost thou see any one coming?

'I look, father, for the Highland youth, Conachar, who will be thy guide to the hills, where his father can afford thee a safe, if a rude, retreat. This he has often promised, when we spoke of you and of your lessons. I fear he is now in company where he will soon forget them.'

'The youth hath sparkles of grace in him,' said Father Clement, 'although those of his race are usually too much devoted to their own fierce and savage customs to endure with patience either the restraints of religion or those of the social law. Thou hast never told me, daughter, how, contrary to all the usages either of the burgh or of the mountains, this youth came to reside in thy father's house?'

'All I know touching that matter,' said Catharine, 'is, that his father is a man of consequence among those hill-men, and that he desired as a favour of my father, who hath had dealings with them in the way of his merchandise, to keep this youth for a certain time, and that it is only two days since they parted, as Conachar was to return home to his own mountains.'

'And why has my daughter,' demanded the priest, 'maintained such a correspondence with this Highland youth, that she should know how to send for him when she desired to use his services in my behalf? Surely, this is much influence for a maiden to possess over such a wild colt as this youthful mountaineer.'

Catharine blushed, and answered with hesitation, 'If I have had any influence with Conachar, Heaven be my witness, I have only exerted it to enforce upon his fiery temper compliance with the rules of civil life. It is true, I have long expected that you, my father, would be obliged to take to flight, and I therefore had agreed with him that he should meet me at this place, as soon as he should receive a message from me with a token,

which I yesterday despatched. The messenger was a light-footed boy of his own clan, whom he used sometimes to send on errands into the Highlands.'

'And am I then to understand, daughter, that this youth, so fair to the eye, was nothing more dear to you than as you desired to enlighten his mind and reform his manners?'

'It is so, my father, and no otherwise,' answered Catharine, 'and perhaps I did not do well to hold intimacy with him, even for his instruction and improvement. But my discourse never led farther'

'Then have I been mistaken, my daughter, for I thought I had seen in thee of late some change of purpose, and some wishful regards looking back to this world, of which you were at one time resolved to take leave.'

Catharine hung down her head and blushed more deeply than ever as she said, 'Yourself, father, were used to remonstrate against my taking the veil.'

'Nor do I now approve of it, my child,' said the priest. 'Marriage is an honourable state, appointed by Heaven as the regular means of continuing the race of man, and I read not in the Scriptures what human inventions have since affirmed concerning the superior excellence of a state of celibacy. But I am jealous of thee, my child, as a father is of his only daughter, lest thou shouldst throw thyself away upon some one unworthy of thee. Thy parent, I know, less nice in thy behalf than I am, countenances the addresses of that fierce and riotous reveller whom they call Henry of the Wynd. He is rich it may be, but a haunter of idle and debauched company — a common prize-fighter, who has shed human blood like water. Can such a one be a fit mate for Catharine Glover? And yet report says they are soon to be united.'

The Fair Maid of Perth's complexion changed from red to pale, and from pale to red, as she hastily replied, 'I think not of him, though it is true some courtesies have passed betwixt us of late, both as he is my father's friend and as being, according to the custom of the time, my Valentine.'

'Your Valentine, my child!' said Father Clement. 'And can your modesty and prudence have trifled so much with the delicacy of your sex as to place yourself in such a relation to such a man as this artificer? Think you that this Valentine, a godly saint and Christian bishop, as he is said to have been, ever countenanced a silly and unseemly custom, more likely to have originated in the heathen worship of Flora or Venus, when

mortals gave the names of deities to their passions, and studied to excite instead of restraining them ?'

'Father,' said Catharine, in a tone of more displeasure than she had ever before assumed to the Carthusian, 'I know not upon what ground you tax me thus severely for complying with a general practice, authorised by universal custom and sanctioned by my father's authority. I cannot feel it kind that you put such misconstruction upon me.'

'Forgive me, daughter,' answered the priest, mildly, 'if I have given you offence. But this Henry Gow, or Smith, is a forward, licentious man, to whom you cannot allow any uncommon degree of intimacy and encouragement, without exposing yourself to worse misconstruction — unless, indeed, it be your purpose to wed him, and that very shortly.'

'Say no more of it, my father,' said Catharine. 'You give me more pain than you would desire to do, and I may be provoked to answer otherwise than as becomes me. Perhaps I have already had cause enough to make me repent my compliance with an idle custom. At any rate, believe that Henry Smith is nothing to me, and that even the idle intercourse arising from St Valentine's Day is utterly broken off.'

'I am rejoiced to hear it, my daughter,' replied the Carthusian, 'and must now prove you on another subject, which renders me most anxious on your behalf. You cannot yourself be ignorant of it, although I could wish it were not necessary to speak of a thing so dangerous, even before these surrounding rocks, cliffs, and stones. But it must be said. Catharine, you have a lover in the highest rank of Scotland's sons of honour?'

'I know it, father,' answered Catharine, composedly. 'I would it were not so.'

'So would I also,' said the priest, 'did I see in my daughter only the child of folly, which most young women are at her age, especially if possessed of the fatal gift of beauty. But as thy charms, to speak the language of an idle world, have attached to thee a lover of such high rank, so I know that thy virtue and wisdom will maintain the influence over the Prince's mind which thy beauty hath acquired.'

'Father,' replied Catharine, 'the Prince is a licentious gallant, whose notice of me tends only to my disgrace and ruin. Can you, who seemed but now afraid that I acted imprudently in entering into an ordinary exchange of courtesies

with one of my own rank, speak with patience of the sort of correspondence which the heir of Scotland dares to fix upon me? Know that it is but two nights since he, with a party of his debauched followers, would have carried me by force from my father's house, had I not been rescued by that same rash spirited Henry Smith, who, if he be too hasty in venturing on danger on slight occasion, is always ready to venture his life in behalf of innocence or in resistance of oppression. It is well my part to do him that justice'

'I should know something of that matter,' said the monk, 'since it was my voice that sent him to your assistance. I had seen the party as I passed your door, and was hastening to the civil power in order to raise assistance, when I perceived a man's figure coming slowly towards me. Apprehensive it might be one of the ambuscade, I stepped behind the buttresses of the chapel of St. John, and seeing from a nearer view that it was Henry Smith, I guessed which way he was bound, and raised my voice in an exhortation which made him double his speed.'

'I am beholden to you, father,' said Catharine, 'but all this, and the Duke of Rothsay's own language to me, only show that the Prince is a profligate young man, who will scruple no extremities which may promise to gratify an idle passion, at whatever expense to its object. His emissary, Ramorny, has even had the insolence to tell me that my father shall suffer for it if I dare to prefer being the wife of an honest man to becoming the loose paramour of a married prince. So I see no other remedy than to take the veil, or run the risk of my own ruin and my poor father's. Were there no other reason, the terror of these threats, from a man so notoriously capable of keeping his word, ought as much to prevent my becoming the bride of any worthy man as it should prohibit me from unlatching his door to admit murderers. Oh, good father, what a lot is mine! and how fatal am I likely to prove to my affectionate parent, and to any one with whom I might ally my unhappy fortunes!'

'Be yet of good cheer, my daughter,' said the monk, 'there is comfort for thee even in this extremity of apparent distress. Ramorny is a villain, and abuses the ear of his patron. The Prince is unhappily a dissipated and idle youth, but, unless my grey hairs have been strangely imposed on, his character is beginning to alter. He hath been awakened to Ramorny's baseness, and deeply regrets having followed his evil advice. I

believe, nay, I am well convinced, that his passion for you has assumed a nobler and purer character, and that the lessons he has heard from me on the corruptions of the church and of the times will, if enforced from your lips, sink deeply into his heart, and perhaps produce fruits for the world to wonder as well as rejoice at. Old prophecies have said that Rome shall fall by the speech of a woman.'

'These are dreams, father,' said Catharine — 'the visions of one whose thoughts are too much on better things to admit his thinking justly upon the ordinary affairs of earth. When we have looked long at the sun, everything else can only be seen indistinctly.'

'Thou art over-hasty, my daughter,' said Clement, 'and thou shalt be convinced of it. The prospects which I am to open to thee were unfit to be exposed to one of a less firm sense of virtue, or a more ambitious temper. Perhaps it is not fit that, even to you, I should display them, but my confidence is strong in thy wisdom and thy principles. Know, then, that there is much chance that the Church of Rome will dissolve the union which she has herself formed, and release the Duke of Rothsay from his marriage with Marjory Douglas.'

Here he paused.

'And if the church hath power and will to do this,' replied the maiden, 'what influence can the divorce of the Duke from his wife produce on the fortunes of Catharine Glover?'

She looked at the priest anxiously as she spoke, and he had some apparent difficulty in framing his reply, for he looked on the ground while he answered her.

'What did beauty do for Catharine Logie? Unless our fathers have told us falsely, it raised her to share the throne of David Bruce.'

'Did she live happy or die regretted, good father?' asked Catharine, in the same calm and steady tone.

'She formed her alliance from temporal, and perhaps criminal, ambition,' replied Father Clement, 'and she found her reward in vanity and vexation of spirit. But had she wedded with the purpose that the believing wife should convert the unbelieving, or confirm the doubting, husband, what then had been her reward? Love and honour upon earth, and an inheritance in Heaven with Queen Margaret and those heroines who have been the nursing mothers of the church.'

Hitherto Catharine had sat upon a stone beside the priest's feet, and looked up to him as she spoke or listened, but now,

as if animated by calm, yet settled, feelings of disapprobation, she rose up, and, extending her hand towards the monk as she spoke, addressed him with a countenance and voice which might have become a cherub, pitying, and even as much as possible sparing, the feelings of the mortal whose errors he is commissioned to rebuke.

‘And is it even so?’ she said, ‘and can so much of the wishes, hopes, and prejudices of this vile world affect him who may be called to-morrow to lay down his life for opposing the corruptions of a wicked age and backsliding priesthood? Can it be the severely-virtuous Father Clement who advises his child to aim at, or even to think of, the possession of a throne and a bed which cannot become vacant but by an act of crying injustice to the present possessor? Can it be the wise reformer of the church who wishes to rest a scheme, in itself so unjust, upon a foundation so precarious? Since when is it, good father, that the principal libertine has altered his morals so much, to be likely to court in honourable fashion the daughter of a Perth artisan? Two days must have wrought this change, for only that space has passed since he was breaking into my father’s house at midnight, with worse mischief in his mind than that of a common robber. And think you that, if Rothsay’s heart could dictate so mean a match, he could achieve such a purpose without endangering both his succession and his life, assailed by the Douglas and March at the same time, for what they must receive as an act of injury and insult to both their houses? Oh! Father Clement, where was your principle, where your prudence, when they suffered you to be bewildered by so strange a dream, and placed the meanest of your disciples in the right thus to reproach you?’

The old man’s eyes filled with tears, as Catharine, visibly and painfully affected by what she had said, became at length silent.

‘By the mouths of babes and sucklings,’ he said, ‘hath He rebuked those who would seem wise in their generation. I thank Heaven, that hath taught me better thoughts than my own vanity suggested, through the medium of so kind a mistress. Yes, Catharine, I must not hereafter wonder or exclaim when I see those whom I have hitherto judged too harshly struggling for temporal power, and holding all the while the language of religious zeal. I thank thee, daughter, for thy salutary admonition, and I thank Heaven that sent it by thy lips, rather than those of a sterner reprovcr’

Catharine had raised her head to reply, and bid the old man, whose humiliation gave her pain, be comforted, when her eyes were arrested by an object close at hand. Among the crags and cliffs which surrounded this place of seclusion, there were two which stood in such close contiguity, that they seemed to have been portions of the same rock, which, rended by lightning or by an earthquake, now exhibited a chasm of about four feet in breadth, betwixt the masses of stone. Into this chasm an oak-tree had thrust itself, in one of the fantastic frolics which vegetation often exhibits in such situations. The tree, stunted and ill-fed, had sent its roots along the face of the rock in all directions to seek for supplies, and they lay like military lines of communication, contorted, twisted, and knotted like the immense snakes of the Indian archipelago. As Catharine's look fell upon the curious complication of knotty branches and twisted roots, she was suddenly sensible that two large eyes were visible among them, fixed and glaring at her, like those of a wild animal in ambush. She started, and, without speaking, pointed out the object to her companion, and looking herself with more strict attention, could at length trace out the bushy red hair and shaggy beard, which had hitherto been concealed by the drooping branches and twisted roots of the tree.

When he saw himself discovered, the Highlander, for such he proved, stepped forth from his lurking-place, and, stalking forward, displayed a colossal person, clothed in a purple, red, and green checked plaid, under which he wore a jacket of bull's hide. His bow and arrows were at his back, his head was bare, and a large quantity of tangled locks, like the glibbs of the Irish, served to cover the head, and supplied all the purposes of a bonnet. His belt bore a sword and dagger, and he had in his hand a Danish pole-axe, more recently called a Lochaber axe. Through the same rude portal advanced, one by one, four men more, of similar size, and dressed and armed in the same manner.

Catharine was too much accustomed to the appearance of the inhabitants of the mountains so near to Perth to permit herself to be alarmed, as another Lowland maiden might have been on the same occasion. She saw with tolerable composure these gigantic forms arrange themselves in a semicircle around and in front of the monk and herself, all bending upon them in silence their large fixed eyes, expressing, as far as she could judge, a wild admiration of her beauty. She inclined her head to them, and uttered imperfectly the usual words of a Highland

salutation. The elder and leader of the party returned the greeting, and then again remained silent and motionless. The monk told his beads, and even Catharine began to have strange fears for her personal safety, and anxiety to know whether they were to consider themselves at personal freedom. She resolved to make the experiment, and moved forward as if to descend the hill, but when she attempted to pass the line of Highlanders, they extended their pole axes betwixt each other, so as effectually to occupy each opening through which she could have passed.

Somewhat disconcerted, yet not dismayed, for she could not conceive that any evil was intended, she sat down upon one of the scattered fragments of rock, and bade the monk, standing by her side, be of good courage.

'If I fear,' said Father Clement, 'it is not for myself, for whether I be brained with the axes of these wild men, like an ox when, worn out by labour, he is condemned to the slaughter, or whether I am bound with their bowstrings, and delivered over to those who will take my life with more cruel ceremony, it can but little concern me, if they suffer thee, dearest daughter, to escape uninjured.'

'We have neither of us,' replied the Maiden of Perth, 'any cause for apprehending evil, and here comes Conachar to assure us of it.'

Yet, as she spoke, she almost doubted her own eyes, so altered were the manner and attire of the handsome, stately, and almost splendidly dressed youth who, springing like a roe buck from a cliff of considerable height, lighted just in front of her. His dress was of the same tartan worn by those who had first made their appearance, but closed at the throat and elbows with a necklace and armlets of gold. The hauberk which he wore over his person was of steel, but so clearly burnished that it shone like silver. His arms were profusely ornamented, and his bonnet, besides the eagle's feather marking the quality of chief, was adorned with a chain of gold, wrapt several times around it, and secured by a large clasp, glistening with pearls. His brooch, by which the tartan mantle, or plaid, as it is now called, was secured on the shoulder, was also of gold, large and curiously carved. He bore no weapon in his hand, excepting a small sapling stick with a hooked head. His whole appearance and gait, which used formerly to denote a sullen feeling of conscious degradation, was now bold, forward, and haughty, and he stood before Catharine with

smiling confidence, as if fully conscious of his improved appearance, and waiting till she should recognise him.

‘Conachar,’ said Catharine, desirous to break this state of suspense, ‘are these your father’s men?’

‘No, fair Catharine,’ answered the young man. ‘Conachar is no more, unless in regard to the wrongs he has sustained, and the vengeance which they demand. I am Ian Eachin MacIan, son to the chief of the Clan Quhele. I have moulted my feathers, as you see, when I changed my name. And for these men, they are not my father’s followers, but mine. You see only one-half of them collected. They form a band consisting of my foster-father and eight sons, who are my body-guard, and the children of my belt, who breathe but to do my will. But Conachar,’ he added, in a softer tone of voice, ‘lives again so soon as Catharine desires to see him, and while he is the young chief of the Clan Quhele to all others, he is to her as humble and obedient as when he was Simon Glover’s apprentice. See, here is the stick I had from you when we nitted together in the sunny braes of Lednoch, when autumn was young in the year that is gone. I would not exchange it, Catharine, for the truncheon of my tribe.’

While Eachin thus spoke, Catharine began to doubt in her own mind whether she had acted prudently in requesting the assistance of a bold young man, elated, doubtless, by his sudden elevation from a state of servitude to one which she was aware gave him extensive authority over a very lawless body of adherents.

‘You do not fear me, fair Catharine?’ said the young chief, taking her hand. ‘I suffered my people to appear before me for a few minutes, that I might see how you could endure their presence, and methinks you regarded them as if you were born to be a chieftain’s wife.’

‘I have no reason to fear wrong from Highlanders,’ said Catharine, firmly, ‘especially as I thought Conachar was with them. Conachar has drunk of our cup and eaten of our bread, and my father has often had traffic with Highlanders, and never was there wrong or quarrel betwixt him and them.’

‘No?’ replied Hector, for such is the Saxon equivalent for Eachin, ‘what! never when he took the part of the Gow Chrom (the bandy-legged smith) against Eachin MacIan? Say nothing to excuse it, and believe it will be your own fault if I ever again allude to it. But you had some command to lay upon me, speak, and you shall be obeyed.’

Catharine hastened to reply, for there was something in the young chief's manner and language which made her desire to shorten the interview

'Eachin,' she said, 'since Conachar is no longer your name, you ought to be sensible that in claiming, as I honestly might, a service from my equal, I little thought that I was addressing a person of such superior power and consequence. You, as well as I, have been obliged to the religious instruction of this good man. He is now in great danger wicked men have accused him with false charges, and he is desirous to remain in safety and concealment till the storm shall pass away.'

'Ha! the good clerk Clement! Ay, the worthy clerk did much for me, and more than my rugged temper was capable to profit by. I will be glad to see any one in the town of Perth persecute one who hath taken hold of MacIain's mantle!'

'It may not be safe to trust too much to that,' said Catharine. 'I nothing doubt the power of your tribe, but when the Black Douglas takes up a feud, he is not to be scared by the shaking of a Highland plaid.'

The Highlander disguised his displeasure at this speech with a forced laugh.

'The sparrow,' he said, 'that is next the eye seems larger than the eagle that is perched on Bengoile. You fear the Douglasses most, because they sit next to you. But be it as you will. You will not believe how wide our hills, and vales, and forests extend beyond the dusky barrier of yonder mountains, and you think all the world lies on the banks of the Tay. But this good clerk shall see hills that could hide him were all the Douglasses on his quest—ay, and he shall see men enough also to make them glad to get once more southward of the Grampians. And wherefore should you not go with the good man? I will send a party to bring him in safety from Perth, and we will set up the old trade beyond Loch Tay—only no more cutting out of gloves for me. I will find your father in hides, but I will not cut them, save when they are on the creatures' backs.'

'My father will come one day and see your housekeeping, Conachar—I mean, Hector. But times must be quieter, for there is feud between the town's people and the followers of the noblemen, and there is speech of war about to break out in the Highlands.'

'Yes, by Our Lady, Catharine! and were it not for that same Highland war, you should not thus put off your Highland visit, my pretty mistress. But the race of the hills are no

longer to be divided into two nations They will fight like men for the supremacy, and he who gets it will deal with the King of Scotland as an equal, not as a superior Pray that the victory may fall to MacIain, my pious St Catharine, for thou shalt pray for one who loves thee dearly'

'I will pray for the right,' said Catharine, 'or rather, I will pray that there be peace on all sides Farewell, kind and excellent Father Clement Believe I shall never forget thy lessons, remember me in thy prayers But how wilt thou be able to sustain a journey so toilsome?'

'They shall carry him if need be,' said Hector, 'if we go far without finding a horse for him But you, Catharine—it is far from hence to Perth. Let me attend you thither as I was wont'

'If you were as you were wont, I would not refuse your escort But gold brooches and bracelets are perilous company, when the Liddesdale and Annandale lancers are riding as throng upon the highway as the leaves at Hallowmass, and there is no safe meeting betwixt Highland tartans and steel jackets'

She hazarded this remark, as she somewhat suspected that, in casting his slough, young Eachin had not entirely surmounted the habits which he had acquired in his humbler state, and that, though he might use bold words, he would not be rash enough to brave the odds of numbers, to which a descent into the vicinity of the city would be likely to expose him It appeared that she judged correctly, for, after a farewell, in which she compounded for the immunity of her lips by permitting him to kiss her hand, she returned towards Perth, and could obtain at times, when she looked back, an occasional glance of the Highlanders, as, winding through the most concealed and impracticable paths, they bent their way towards the North.

She felt in part relieved from her immediate anxiety, as the distance increased betwixt her and these men, whose actions were only directed by the will of their chief, and whose chief was a giddy and impetuous boy She apprehended no insult on her return to Perth from the soldiery of any party whom she might meet, for the rules of chivalry were in those days a surer protection to a maiden of decent appearance than an escort of armed men, whose cognizance might not be acknowledged as friendly by any other party whom they might chance to encounter But more remote dangers pressed on her apprehension The pursuit of the licentious Prince was rendered formidable by threats which his unprincipled counsellor,

Ramorny, had not shunned to utter against her father, if she persevered in her coyness. These menaces, in such an age, and from such a character, were deep grounds for alarm, nor could she consider the pretensions to her favour which Conachar had scarce repressed during his state of servitude, and seemed now to avow boldly, as less fraught with evil, since there had been repeated incursions of the Highlanders into the very town of Perth, and citizens had, on more occasions than one, been made prisoners and carried off from their own houses, or had fallen by the claymore in the very streets of their city. She feared, too, her father's importunity on behalf of the smith, of whose conduct on St. Valentine's Day unworthy reports had reached her, and whose suit, had he stood clear in her good opinion, she dared not listen to, while Ramorny's threats of revenge upon her father rung on her ear. She thought on these various dangers with the deepest apprehension, and an earnest desire to escape from them and herself, by taking refuge in the cloister, but saw no possibility of obtaining her father's consent to the only course from which she expected peace and protection.

In the course of these reflections, we cannot discover that she very distinctly regretted that her perils attended her because she was the Fair Maid of Perth. This was one point which marked that she was not yet altogether an angel, and perhaps it was another that, in despite of Henry Smith's real or supposed delinquencies, a sigh escaped from her bosom when she thought upon St. Valentine's dawn.

CHAPTER XV

O for a draught of power to steep
The soul of agony in sleep'

Bertha.

WE have shown the secrets of the confessional, those of the sick-chamber are not hidden from us. In a darkened apartment, where salves and medicines showed that the leech had been busy in his craft, a tall thin form lay on a bed, arrayed in a nightgown belted around him, with pain on his brow, and a thousand stormy passions agitating his bosom. Everything in the apartment indicated a man of opulence and of expense. Henbane Dwining, the apothecary, who seemed to have the care of the patient, stole with a crafty and cat-like step from one corner of the room to another, busying himself with mixing medicines and preparing dressings. The sick man groaned once or twice, on which the leech, advancing to his bedside, asked whether these sounds were a token of the pain of his body or of the distress of his mind.

'Of both, thou poisoning varlet,' said Sir John Ramorny, 'and of being encumbered with thy accursed company.'

'If that is all, I can relieve your knighthood of one of these ills by presently removing myself elsewhere. Thanks to the feuds of this boisterous time, had I twenty hands, instead of these two poor servants of my art (displaying his skinny palms), there is enough of employment for them — well-requited employment, too, where thanks and crowns contend which shall best pay my services, while you, Sir John, wreak upon your surgeon the anger you ought only to bear against the author of your wound.'

'Villain, it is beneath me to reply to thee,' said the patient, 'but every word of thy malignant tongue is a dirk, inflicting wounds which set all the medicines of Arabia at defiance.'

'Sir John, I understand you not, but if you give way to

these tempestuous fits of rage, it is impossible but fever and inflammation must be the result.'

'Why then dost thou speak in a sense to chafe my blood? Why dost thou name the supposition of thy worthless self having more hands than nature gave thee, while I, a knight and gentleman, am mutilated like a cripple?'

'Sir John,' replied the chirurgion, 'I am no divine, nor a mainly obstinate believer in some things which divines tell us. Yet I may remind you that you have been kindly dealt with, for if the blow which has done you this injury had lighted on your neck, as it was aimed, it would have swept your head from your shoulders, instead of amputating a less considerable member.'

'I wish it had, Dwining—I wish it had lighted as it was addressed. I should not then have seen a policy which had spun a web so fine as mine burst through by the brute force of a drunken churl. I should not have been reserved to see horses which I must not mount, lists which I must no longer enter, splendours which I cannot hope to share, or battles which I must not take part in. I should not, with a man's passions for power and for strife, be set to keep place among the women, despised by them, too, as a miserable, impotent cripple, unable to aim at obtaining the favour of the sex.'

'Supposing all this to be so, I will yet pray of your knight-hood to remark,' replied Dwining, still busying himself with arranging the dressings of the wounds, 'that your eyes, which you must have lost with your head, may, being spared to you, present as rich a prospect of pleasure as either ambition, or victory in the lists or in the field, or the love of woman itself, could have proposed to you.'

'My sense is too dull to catch thy meaning, leech,' replied Ramorny. 'What is this precious spectacle reserved to me in such a shipwreck?'

'The dearest that mankind knows,' replied Dwining, and then, in the accent of a lover who utters the name of his beloved mistress, and expresses his passion for her in the very tone of his voice, he added the word 'REVENGE!'

The patient had raised himself on his couch to listen with some anxiety for the solution of the physician's enigma. He laid himself down again as he heard it explained, and after a short pause asked, 'In what Christian college learned you this morality, good Master Dwining?'

'In no Christian college,' answered his physician, 'for,

though it is privately received in most, it is openly and manfully adopted in none. But I have studied among the sages of Granada, where the fiery-souled Moor lifts high his deadly dagger as it drops with his enemy's blood, and avows the doctrine which the pallid Christian practises, though coward-like he dare not name it.'

'Thou art then a more high-souled villain than I deemed thee,' said Ramorny.

'Let that pass,' answered Dwining. 'The waters that are the stillest are also the deepest, and the foe is most to be dreaded who never threatens till he strikes. You knights and men-at-arms go straight to your purpose with sword in hand. We who are clerks win our access with a noiseless step and an indirect approach, but attain our object not less surely.'

'And I,' said the knight, 'who have trod to my revenge with a mailed foot, which made all echo around it, must now use such a slipper as thine — ha?'

'He who lacks strength,' said the wily mediciner, 'must attain his purpose by skill.'

'And tell me sincerely, mediciner, wherefore thou wouldst read me these devil's lessons? Why wouldst thou thrust me faster or farther on to my vengeance than I may seem to thee ready to go of my own accord? I am old in the ways of the world, man, and I know that such as thou do not drop words in vain, or thrust themselves upon the dangerous confidence of men like me save with the prospect of advancing some purpose of their own. What interest hast thou in the road, whether peaceful or bloody, which I may pursue on these occurrents?'

'In plain dealing, sir knight, though it is what I seldom use,' answered the leech, 'my road to revenge is the same with yours.'

'With mine, man?' said Ramorny, with a tone of scornful surprise. 'I thought it had been high beyond thy reach. Thou aim at the same revenge with Ramorny!'

'Ay, truly,' replied Dwining, 'for the smithy churl under whose blow you have suffered has often done me despite and injury. He has thwarted me in counsel and despised me in action. His brutal and unhesitating bluntness is a living reproach to the subtlety of my natural disposition. I fear him, and I hate him.'

'And you hope to find an active coadjutor in me?' said Ramorny, in the same supercilious tone as before. 'But know, the artisan fellow is too low in degree to be to me either the

object of hatred or of fear Yet he shall not escape We hate not the reptile that has stung us, though we might shake it off the wound, and tread upon it. I know the ruffian of old as a stout man at-arms, and a pretender, as I have heard, to the favour of the scornful puppet whose beauties, forsooth, spurred us to our wise and hopeful attempt. Fiends that direct this nether world, by what malice have ye decided that the hand which has couched a lance against the bosom of a prince should be struck off like a sapling by the blow of a churl, and during the turmoil of a midnight riot? Well, mediciner, thus far our courses hold together, and I bid thee well believe that I will crush for thee this reptile mechanic But do not thou think to escape me when that part of my revenge is done which will be most easily and speedily accomplished.'

'Not, it may be, altogether so easily accomplished,' said the apothecary, 'for if your knighthood will credit me, there will be found small ease or security in dealing with him. He is the strongest, boldest, and most skilful swordsman in Perth and all the country around it.'

'Fear nothing, he shall be met with had he the strength of Sampson. But then, mark me! Hope not thou to escape my vengeance, unless thou become my passive agent in the scene which is to follow Mark me, I say once more. I have studied at no Moorish college, and lack some of thy unbounded appetite for revenge, but yet I will have my share of vengeance. Listen to me, mediciner, while I shall thus far unfold myself, but beware of treachery, for, powerful as thy fiend is, thou hast taken lessons from a meaner devil than mine Hearken—the master whom I have served through vice and virtue, with too much zeal for my own character, perhaps, but with unshaken fidelity to him—the very man, to soothe whose frantic folly I have incurred this irreparable loss, is, at the prayer of his doating father, about to sacrifice me, by turning me out of his favour, and leaving me at the mercy of the hypocritical relative with whom he seeks a precarious reconciliation at my expense. If he perseveres in this most ungrateful purpose, thy fiercest Moors, were their complexion swarthy as the smoke of hell, shall blush to see their revenge outdone. But I will give him one more chance for honour and safety before my wrath shall descend on him in unrelenting and unmitigated fury There, then, thus far thou hast my confidence. Close hands on our bargain. Close hands, did I say? Where is the hand that should be the pledge and representative of Ramorny's plighted

THE FAIR MAID OF PERTH

? Is it nailed on the public pillory, or flung as offal to the
leess dogs, who are even now snailing over it? Lay thy
r on the mutilated stump, then, and swear to be a faithful
e in my revenge, as I shall be in yours How now, sir
a, look you pale—you, who say to death, stand back or
nce, can you tremble to think of him or to hear him
ed? I have not mentioned your fee, for one who loves
nge for itself requires no deeper bribe, yet, if broad lands
large sums of gold can increase thy zeal in a brave cause,
ve me, these shall not be lacking'

'They tell for something in my humble wishes,' said Dwinn-
'the poor man in this bustling world is thrust down like
warf in a crowd, and so trodden under foot, the rich and
erful rise like giants above the press, and are at ease, while
s turmoil around them'

Then shalt thou arise above the press, mediciner, as high
gold can raise thee 'This purse is weighty, yet it is but an
nest of thy guerdon'

And this Smith, my noble benefactor,' said the leech, as
pouched the gratuity—'this Henry of the Wynd, or what-
e is his name—would not the news that he hath paid the
alty of his action assuage the pain of thy knighthood's
nd better than the balm of Mecca with which I have
ed it?'

He is beneath the thoughts of Ramorny, and I have no
re resentment against him than I have ill-will at the sense-
e weapon which he swayed But it is just thy hate should
vented upon him Where is he chiefly to be met with?'

That also I have considered,' said Dwinn 'To make
attempt by day in his own house were too open and
agerous, for he hath five servants who work with him at the
hy, four of them strong knaves, and all loving to their
ster By night were scarce less desperate, for he hath his
rs strongly secured with bolt of oak and bar of iron, and
the fastenings of his house could be forced, the neighbour-
od would rise to his rescue, especially as they are still
rmed by the practice on St Valentine's Even'

O ay, true, mediciner,' said Ramorny, 'for deceit is thy
ure even with me thou knewest my hand and signet, as
ou said'st, when that hand was found cast out on the street,
e the disgusting refuse of a shambles—why, having such
nowledge, went'st thou with these jolterheaded citizens to
nsult that Patrick Charteris, whose spurs should be hacked

off from his heels for the communion which he holds with paltry burghers, and whom thou brought'st here with the fools to do dishonour to the lifeless hand, which, had it held its wonted place, he was not worthy to have touched in peace or faced in war ?'

'My noble patron, as soon as I had reason to know you had been the sufferer, I urged them with all my powers of persuasion to desist from prosecuting the feud, but the swaggering smith, and one or two other hot heads, cried out for vengeance. Your knighthood must know this fellow calls himself bachelor to the Fair Maiden of Perth, and stands upon his honour to follow up her father's quarrel, but I have forestalled his market in that quarter, and that is something in earnest of revenge.'

'How mean you by that, sir leech ?' said the patient.

'Your knighthood shall conceive,' said the mediciner, 'that this smith doth not live within compass, but is an outlier and a galliard. I met him myself on St. Valentine's Day, shortly after the affray between the townsfolk and the followers of Douglas. Yes, I met him sneaking through the lanes and bye-passages with a common minstrel wench, with her messan and her viol on his one arm and her buxom self hanging upon the other. What thinks your honour ? Is not this a trim squire, to cross a prince's love with the fairest girl in Perth, strike off the hand of a knight and baron, and become gentleman-usher to a strolling glee-woman, all in the course of the same four-and-twenty hours ?'

'Marry, I think the better of him that he has so much of a gentleman's humour, clown though he be,' said Ramorny. 'I would he had been a precisian instead of a galliard, and I should have had better heart to aid thy revenge. And such revenge !—revenge on a smith—in the quarrel of a pitiful manufacturer of rotten cheverons ! Pah ! And yet it shall be taken in full. Thou hast commenced it, I warrant me, by thine own manœuvres.'

'In a small degree only,' said the apothecary. 'I took care that two or three of the most notorious gossips in Curfew Street, who liked not to hear Catharine called the Fair Maid of Perth, should be possessed of this story of her faithful Valentine. They opened on the scent so keenly, that, rather than doubt had fallen on the tale, they would have vouched for it as if their own eyes had seen it. The lover came to her father's within an hour after, and your worship may think what a reception he had from the angry glover, for the damsel herself would not be looked upon. And thus your honour sees

I had a foretaste of revenge But I trust to receive the full draught from the hands of your lordship, with whom I am in a brotherly league, which ——'

'Brotherly!' said the knight, contemptuously. 'But be it so, the priests say we are all of one common earth I cannot tell, there seems to me some difference, but the better mould shall keep faith with the baser, and thou shalt have thy revenge Call thou my page hither'

A young man made his appearance from the ante-room upon the physician's summons

'Eviot,' said the knight, 'does Bonthron wait? and is he sober?'

'He is as sober as sleep can make him after a deep drink,' answered the page

'Then fetch him hither, and do thou shut the door'

A heavy step presently approached the apartment, and a man entered, whose deficiency of height seemed made up in breadth of shoulders and strength of arm

'There is a man thou must deal upon, Bonthron,' said the knight

The man smoothed his rugged features and grinned a smile of satisfaction.

'That mediciner will show thee the party Take such advantage of time, place, and circumstance as will ensure the result, and mind you come not by the worst, for the man is the fighting Smith of the Wynd'

'It will be a tough job,' growled the assassin, 'for if I miss my blow, I may esteem myself but a dead man All Perth rings with the smith's skill and strength.'

'Take two assistants with thee,' said the knight.

'Not I,' said Bonthron 'If you double anything, let it be the reward'

'Account it doubled,' said his master, 'but see thy work be thoroughly executed.'

'Trust me for that, sir knight seldom have I failed.'

'Use this sage man's directions,' said the wounded knight, pointing to the physician 'And hark thee, await his coming forth, and drink not till the business be done'

'I will not,' answered the dark satellite, 'my own life depends on my blow being steady and sure I know whom I have to deal with.'

'Vanish, then, till he summons you, and have axe and dagger in readiness'

Bonthron nodded and withdrew

'Will your knighthood venture to entrust such an act to a single hand?' said the mediciner, when the assassin had left the room. 'May I pray you to remember that yonder party did, two nights since, baffle six armed men?'

'Question me not, sir mediciner a man like Bonthron, who knows time and place, is worth a score of confused revellers. Call Eviot, thou shalt first exert thy powers of healing, and do not doubt that thou shalt, in the farther work, be aided by one who will match thee in the art of sudden and unexpected destruction.'

The page Eviot again appeared at the mediciner's summons, and at his master's sign assisted the surgeon in removing the dressings from Sir John Ramorny's wounded arm. Dwining viewed the naked stump with a species of professional satisfaction, enhanced, no doubt, by the malignant pleasure which his evil disposition took in the pain and distress of his fellow-creatures. The knight just turned his eye on the ghastly spectacle, and uttered, under the pressure of bodily pain or mental agony, a groan which he would fain have repressed.

'You groan, sir,' said the leech, in his soft, insinuating tone of voice, but with a sneer of enjoyment, mixed with scorn, curling upon his lip, which his habitual dissimulation could not altogether disguise — 'you groan, but be comforted. This Henry Smith knows his business his sword is as true to its aim as his hammer to the anvil. Had a common swordsman struck this fatal blow, he had harmed the bone and damaged the muscles, so that even my art might not have been able to repair them. But Henry Smith's cut is clean, and as sure as that with which my own scalpel could have made the amputation. In a few days you will be able, with care and attention to the ordinances of medicine, to stir abroad.'

'But my hand — the loss of my hand —'

'It may be kept secret for a time,' said the mediciner. 'I have possessed two or three tattling fools, in deep confidence, that the hand which was found was that of your knighthood's groom, Black Quentin, and your knighthood knows that he has parted for Fife, in such sort as to make it generally believed.'

'I know well enough,' said Ramorny, 'that the rumour may stifle the truth for a short time. But what avails this brief delay?'

'It may be concealed till your knighthood retires for a time from the court, and then, when new accidents have darkened

the recollection of the present stir, it may be imputed to a wound received from the shivering of a spear, or from a cross-bow bolt Your slave will find a suitable device, and stand for the truth of it'

'The thought maddens me,' said Ramorny, with another groan of mental and bodily agony, 'yet I see no better remedy'

'There is none other,' said the leech, to whose evil nature his patron's distress was delicious nourishment 'In the meanwhile, it is believed you are confined by the consequences of some bruises, aiding the sense of displeasure at the Prince's having consented to dismiss you from his household at the remonstrance of Albany, which is publicly known.'

'Villain, thou rack'st me!' exclaimed the patient

'Upon the whole, therefore,' said Dwining, 'your knighthood has escaped well, and, saving the lack of your hand, a mischance beyond remedy, you ought rather to rejoice than complain, for no barber-chirurgeon in France or England could have more ably performed the operation than this churl with one downright blow'

'I understand my obligation fully,' said Ramorny, struggling with his anger, and affecting composure, 'and if Bonthron pays him not with a blow equally downright, and rendering the aid of the leech unnecessary, say that John of Ramorny cannot requite an obligation.'

'That is spoke like yourself, noble knight!' answered the mediciner 'And let me further say, that the operator's skill must have been vain, and the hæmorrhage must have drained your life-veins, but for the bandages, the cautery, and the styptics applied by the good monks, and the poor services of your humble vassal, Henbane Dwining'

'Peace,' exclaimed the patient, 'with thy ill-omened voice and worse-omened name!' Methinks, as thou mentionest the tortures I have undergone, my tingling nerves stretch and contract themselves as if they still actuated the fingers that once could clutch a dagger'

'That,' explained the leech, 'may it please your knighthood, is a phenomenon well known to our profession. There have been those among the ancient sages who have thought that there still remained a sympathy between the severed nerves and those belonging to the amputated limb, and that the several fingers are seen to quiver and strain, as corresponding with the impulse which proceeds from their sympathy with the

energies of the living system. Could we recover the hand from the Cross, or from the custody of the Black Douglas, I would be pleased to observe this wonderful operation of occult sympathies. But, I fear me, one might as safely go to wrest the joint from the talons of an hungry eagle.'

'And thou mayst as safely break thy malignant jests on a wounded lion as on John of Ramorny,' said the knight, raising himself in uncontrollable indignation. 'Cartiff, proceed to thy duty, and remember, that if my hand can no longer clasp a dagger, I can command an hundred.'

'The sight of one drawn and brandished in anger were sufficient,' said Dwining, 'to consume the vital powers of your surgeon. But who then,' he added in a tone partly insinuating, partly jeering — 'who would then relieve the fiery and scorching pain which my patron now suffers, and which renders him exasperated even with his poor servant for quoting the rules of healing, so contemptible, doubtless, compared with the power of inflicting wounds?'

Then, as daring no longer to trifle with the mood of his dangerous patient, the leech addressed himself seriously to salving the wound, and applied a fragrant balm, the odour of which was diffused through the apartment, while it communicated a refreshing coolness, instead of the burning heat — a change so gratifying to the fevered patient, that, as he had before groaned with agony, he could not now help sighing for pleasure, as he sank back on his couch to enjoy the ease which the dressing bestowed.

'Your knightly lordship now knows who is your friend,' said Dwining, 'had you yielded to a rash impulse, and said, "Slay me this worthless quacksalver," where, within the four seas of Britain, would you have found the man to have ministered to you as much comfort?'

'Forget my threats, good leech,' said Ramorny, 'and beware how you tempt me. Such as I brook not jests upon our agony. See thou keep thy scoffs, to pass upon misers¹ in the hospital.'

Dwining ventured to say no more, but poured some drops from a phial which he took from his pocket into a small cup of wine allayed with water.

'This draught,' said the man of art, 'is medicated to produce a sleep which must not be interrupted.'

¹ That is, miserable persons, as used in Spenser and other writers of his time, though the sense is now restricted to those who are covetous.

'For how long will it last?' asked the knight

'The period of its operation is uncertain — perhaps till morning'

'Perhaps for ever,' said the patient 'Sir mediciner, taste me that liquor presently, else it passes not my lips'

The leech obeyed him, with a scornful smile 'I would drink the whole with readiness, but the juice of this Indian gum will bring sleep on the healthy man as well as upon the patient, and the business of the leech requires me to be a watcher.'

'I crave your pardon, sir leech,' said Ramorny, looking downwards, as if ashamed to have manifested suspicion

'There is no room for pardon where offence must not be taken,' answered the mediciner 'An insect must thank a giant that he does not tread on him Yet, noble knight, insects have their power of harming as well as physicians What would it have cost me, save a moment's trouble, so to have drugged that balm, as should have made your arm rot to the shoulder joint, and your life-blood curdle in your veins to a corrupted jelly? What is there that prevented me to use means yet more subtle, and to taint your room with essences, before which the light of life twinkles more and more dimly, till it expires, like a torch amidst the foul vapours of some subterranean dungeon? You little estimate my power, if you know not that these and yet deeper modes of destruction stand at command of my art¹ But a physician slays not the patient by whose generosity he lives, and far less will he the breath of whose nostrils is the hope of revenge destroy the vowed ally who is to favour his pursuit of it Yet one word, should a necessity occur for rousing yourself—for who in Scotland can promise himself eight hours' uninterrupted repose?—then smell at the strong essence contained in this pouncet-box And now, farewell, sir knight, and if you cannot think of me as a man of nice conscience, acknowledge me at least as one of reason and of judgment.'

So saying, the mediciner left the room, his usual mean and shuffling gait elevating itself into something more noble, as conscious of a victory over his imperious patient.

Sir John Ramorny remained sunk in unpleasing reflections, until he began to experience the incipient effects of his soporific draught He then roused himself for an instant, and summoned his page

¹ See Poisoning Note 31

'Eviot! what ho ' Eviot! I have done ill to unbosom myself so far to this poisonous quacksalver ' Lviot!'

The page entered.

'Is the mediciner gone forth?'

'Yes, so please your knighthood'

'Alone or accompanied?'

'Bonthron spoke apart with him, and followed him almost immediately — by your lordship's command, as I understood him'

'Lack a day, yes! he goes to seek some medicaments, he will return anon. If he be intoxicated, see he comes not near my chamber, and permit him not to enter into converse with any one. He raves when drink has touched his brain. He was a rare fellow before a Southron bill laid his brain pan bare, but since that time he talks gabberish whenever the cup has crossed his lips. Said the leech aught to you, Eviot?'

'Nothing, save to reiterate his commands that your honour be not disturbed'

'Which thou must surely obey,' said the knight. 'I feel the summons to rest, of which I have been deprived since this unhappy wound. At least, if I have slept it has been but for a snatch. Aid me to take off my gown, Eviot.'

'May God and the saints send you good rest, my lord,' said the page, retiring after he had rendered his wounded master the assistance required.

As Eviot left the room, the knight, whose brain was becoming more and more confused, muttered over the page's departing salutation

'God — saints — I *have* slept sound under such a benison. But now, methinks if I awake not to the accomplishment of my proud hopes of power and revenge, the best wish for me is, that the slumbers which now fall around my head were the forerunners of that sleep which shall return my borrowed powers to their original non existence — I can argue it no farther'

Thus speaking, he fell into a profound sleep

CHAPTER XVI

On Fastern's E'en when we war fou
Scots Song.

THE night which sunk down on the sick-bed of Ramorny was not doomed to be a quiet one. Two hours had passed since curfew-bell, then rung at seven o'clock at night, and in those primitive times all were retired to rest, excepting such whom devotion, or duty, or debauchery made watchers, and the evening being that of Shiovetide, or, as it was called in Scotland, Fastern's E'en,¹ the vigils of gaiety were by far the most frequented of the three.

The common people had, throughout the day, toiled and struggled at football, the nobles and gentry had fought cocks, and hearkened to the wanton music of the minstrel, while the citizens had gorged themselves upon pancakes fried in lard, and brose, or brewis — the fat broth, that is, in which salted beef had been boiled, poured upon highly-toasted oatmeal, a dish which even now is not ungrateful to simple, old-fashioned Scottish palates. These were all exercises and festive dishes proper to the holiday. It was no less a solemnity of the evening that the devout Catholic should drink as much good ale and wine as he had means to procure, and, if young and able, that he should dance at the ring, or figure among the morrice-dancers, who, in the city of Perth, as elsewhere, wore a peculiarly fantastic garb, and distinguished themselves by their address and activity. All this gaiety took place under the prudential consideration that the long term of Lent, now approaching, with its fasts and deprivations, rendered it wise for mortals to cram as much idle and sensual indulgence as they could into the brief space which intervened before its commencement.

The usual revels had taken place, and in most parts of the city were succeeded by the usual pause. A particular degree

¹ See Note 32

of care had been taken by the nobility to prevent any renewal of discord betwixt their followers and the citizens of the town, so that the revels had proceeded with fewer casualties than usual, embracing only three deaths and certain fractured limbs, which, occurring to individuals of little note, were not accounted worth inquiring into. The carnival was closing quietly in general, but in some places the sport was still kept up.

One company of revellers, who had been particularly noticed and applauded, seemed unwilling to conclude their frolic. The entry, as it was called, consisted of thirteen persons, habited in the same manner, having doublets of chamois leather sitting close to their bodies, curiously slashed and laced. They wore green caps with silver tassels, red ribands, and white shoes, had bells hung at their knees and around their ankles, and naked swords in their hands. This gallant party, having exhibited a sword dance before the King, with much clashing of weapons and fantastic interchange of postures, went on gallantly to repeat their exhibition before the door of Simon Glover, where, having made a fresh exhibition of their agility, they caused wine to be served round to their own company and the bystanders, and with a loud shout drank to the health of the Fair Maid of Perth. This summoned old Simon to the door of his habitation, to acknowledge the courtesy of his countrymen, and in his turn to send the wine around in honour of the Merry Morrice-Dancers of Perth.

'We thank thee, father Simon,' said a voice, which strove to drown in an artificial squeak the pert, conceited tone of Oliver Proudfoot. 'But a sight of thy lovely daughter had been more sweet to us young bloods than a whole vintage of Malvoisie.'

'I thank you, neighbours, for your good-will,' replied the glover. 'My daughter is ill at ease, and may not come forth into the cold night air, but if this gay gallant, whose voice methinks I should know, will go into my poor house, she will charge him with thanks for the rest of you.'

'Bring them to us at the hostelry of the Griffin,' cried the rest of the ballet to their favoured companion, 'for there will we ring in Lent, and have another rouse to the health of the lovely Catharine.'

'Have with you in half an hour,' said Oliver, 'and see who will quaff the largest flagon, or sing the loudest glee. Nay, I will be merry in what remains of Eastern's Even, should Lent find me with my mouth closed for ever.'

'Farewell, then,' cried his mates in the morrice — 'farewell, slashing bonnet-maker, till we meet again.'

The morrice-dancers accordingly set out upon their further progress, dancing and carolling as they went along to the sound of four musicians, who led the joyous band, while Simon Glover drew their coryphæus into his house, and placed him in a chair by his parlour fire

'But where is your daughter?' said Oliver 'She is the bait for us brave blades'

'Why, truly, she keeps her apartment, neighbour Oliver, and, to speak plainly, she keeps her bed'

'Why, then will I upstairs to see her in her sorrow; you have marred my ramble, Gaffer Glover, and you owe me amends — a roving blade like me, I will not lose both the lass and the glass Keeps her bed, does she?

My dog and I we have a trick
To visit maids when they are sick;
When they are sick and like to die,
O thither do come my dog and I

And when I die, as needs must hap,
Then bury me under the good ale-tap;
With folded arms there let me lie
Cheek for jowl, my dog and I'

'Canst thou not be serious for a moment, neighbour Proud-fute?' said the glover, 'I want a word of conversation with you'

'Serious!' answered his visitor, 'why, I have been serious all this day I can hardly open my mouth, but something comes out about death, a burial, or such-like — the most serious subjects that I wot of'

'St. John, man!' said the glover, 'art thou fey?'

'No, not a whit it is not my own death which these gloomy fancies foretell. I have a strong horoscope, and shall live for fifty years to come But it is the case of the poor fellow — the Douglas-man, whom I struck down at the fray of St Valentine's he died last night, it is that which weighs on my conscience, and awakens sad fancies. Ah, father Simon, we martialists, that have spilt blood in our choler, have dark thoughts at times, I sometimes wish that my knife had cut nothing but worsted thrums.'

'And I wish,' said Simon, 'that mine had cut nothing but buck's leather, for it has sometimes cut my own fingers But

thou mayst spare thy remorse for this bout there was but one man dangerously hurt at the affray, and it was he from whom Henry Smith hewed the hand, and he is well recovered. His name is Black Quentin, one of Sir John Ramorny's followers. He has been sent privately back to his own country of Fife.'

'What, Black Quentin? Why, that is the very man that Henry and I, as we ever keep close together, struck at in the same moment, only my blow fell somewhat earlier. I fear further feud will come of it, and so does the provost. And is he recovered? Why, then, I will be jovial, and since thou wilt not let me see how Kate becomes her night-gear, I will back to the Griffin to my morrice dancers.'

'Nay, stay but one instant. Thou art a comrade of Henry Wynd, and hast done him the service to own one or two deeds, and this last among others. I would thou couldst clear him of other charges with which fame hath loaded him.'

'Nay, I will swear by the hilt of my sword they are as false as hell, father Simon. What—blades and targets! shall not men of the sword stick together?'

'Nay, neighbour bonnet-maker, be patient, thou mayst do the smith a kind turn, an thou takest this matter the right way. I have chosen thee to consult with anent this matter—not that I hold thee the wisest head in Perth, for should I say so I should lie.'

'Ay—ay,' answered the self-satisfied bonnet-maker, 'I know where you think my fault lies. you cool heads think we hot heads are fools—I have heard men call Henry Wynd such a score of times.'

'Fool enough and cool enough may rhyme together passing well,' said the glover, 'but thou art good-natured, and I think lovest this crony of thine. It stands awkwardly with us and him just now,' continued Simon. 'Thou knowest there hath been some talk of marriage between my daughter Catharine and Henry Gow?'

'I have heard some such song since St Valentine's Morn. Ah! he that shall win the Fair Maid of Perth must be a happy man, and yet marriage spoils many a pretty fellow. I myself somewhat regret——'

'Prithee, truce with thy regrets for the present, man,' interrupted the glover, somewhat peevishly. 'You must know, Oliver, that some of these talking women, who I think make all the business of the world their own, have accused Henry of keeping light company with glee-women and such like. Catharine took

it to heart, and I held my child insulted, that he had not waited upon her like a Valentine, but had thrown himself into unseemly society on the very day when, by ancient custom, he might have had an opportunity to press his interest with my daughter. Therefore, when he came hither late on the evening of St Valentine's, I, like a hasty old fool, bid him go home to the company he had left, and denied him admittance. I have not seen him since, and I begin to think that I may have been too rash in the matter. She is my only child, and the grave should have her sooner than a debauchee. But I have hitherto thought I knew Henry Gow as if he were my son. I cannot think he would use us thus, and it may be there are means of explaining what is laid to his charge. I was led to ask Dwining, who is said to have saluted the smith while he was walking with this choice mate. If I am to believe his words, this wench was the smith's cousin, Joan Letham. But thou knowest that the potter-carrier ever speaks one language with his visage and another with his tongue. Now, thou, Oliver, hast too little wit — I mean, too much honesty — to belie the truth, and as Dwining hinted that thou also hadst seen her ——'

'I see her, Simon Glover!' Will Dwining say that I saw her?'

'No, not precisely that, but he says you *told* him you had met the smith thus accompanied.'

'He lies, and I will pound him into a gallipot!' said Oliver Proudfoot.

'How! Did you never tell him, then, of such a meeting?'

'What an if I did?' said the bonnet-maker. 'Did not he swear that he would never repeat again to living mortal what I communicated to him? and therefore, in telling the occurrent to you, he hath made himself a liar.'

'Thou didst not meet the smith, then,' said Simon, 'with such a loose baggage as fame reports?'

'Lack-a-day, not I, perhaps I did, perhaps I did not. Think, father Simon — I have been a four-years married man, and can you expect me to remember the turn of a glee-woman's ankle, the trip of her toe, the lace upon her petticoat, and such toys? No, I leave that to unmarried wags, like my gossip Henry.'

'The upshot is, then,' said the glover, much vexed, 'you *did* meet him on St Valentine's Day walking the public streets ——'

'Not so, neighbour, I met him in the most distant and

dark lane in Perth, steering full for his own house, with bag and baggage, which, as a gallant fellow, he carried in his arms, the puppy dog on one and the jilt herself—and to my thought she was a pretty one—hanging upon the other’

‘Now, by good St. John,’ said the glover, ‘this infamy would make a Christian man renounce his faith, and worship Mahound in very anger! But he has seen the last of my daughter I would rather she went to the wild Highlands with a bare legged cateran than wed with one who could, at such a season, so broadly forget honour and decency Out upon him!’

‘Tush—tush!’ father Simon, said the liberal-minded bonnet-maker, ‘you consider not the nature of young blood. Their company was not long, for—to speak truth, I did keep a little watch on him—I met him before sunrise, conducting his errant damsel to the Lady’s Stairs, that the wench might embark on the Tay from Perth, and I know for certainty, for I made inquiry, that she sailed in a gabbart for Dundee. So you see it was but a slight escape of youth’

‘And he came here,’ said Simon, bitterly, ‘beseeching for admittance to my daughter, while he had his harlot awaiting him at home! I had rather he had slain a score of men! It skills not talking, least of all to thee, Oliver Proudfoot, who, if thou art not such a one as himself, would fain be thought so But——’

‘Nay, think not of it so seriously,’ said Oliver, who began to reflect on the mischief his tattling was likely to occasion to his friend, and on the consequences of Henry Gow’s displeasure, when he should learn the disclosure which he had made rather in vanity of heart than in evil intention ‘Consider,’ he continued, ‘that there are follies belonging to youth. Occasion provokes men to such frolics, and confession wipes them off I care not if I tell thee that, though my wife be as goodly a woman as the city has, yet I myself——’

‘Peace, silly braggart,’ said the glover, in high wrath, ‘thy loves and thy battles are alike apocryphal. If thou must needs lie, which I think is thy nature, canst thou invent no falsehood that may at least do thee some credit? Do I not see through thee, as I could see the light through the horn of a base lantern? Do I not know, thou filthy weaver of rotten worsted, that thou durst no more cross the threshold of thy own door, if thy wife heard of thy making such a boast, than thou dardest cross naked weapons with a boy of twelve years

old, who has drawn a sword for the first time of his life? By St John, it were paying you for your tale-bearing trouble to send thy Maudie word of thy gay brags'

The bonnet-maker, at this threat, started as if a cross-bow bolt had whizzed past his head when least expected. And it was with a trembling voice that he replied, 'Nay, good father Glover, thou takest too much credit for thy grey hairs. Consider, good neighbour, thou art too old for a young martialist to wrangle with. And in the matter of my Maudie, I can trust thee, for I know no one who would be less willing than thou to break the peace of families'

'Trust thy coxcomb no longer with me,' said the incensed glover, 'but take thyself, and the thing thou call'st a head, out of my reach, lest I borrow back five minutes of my youth and break thy pate!'

'You have had a merry Fastern's Even, neighbour,' said the bonnet-maker, 'and I wish you a quiet sleep, we shall meet better friends to-morrow'

'Out of my doors to-night!' said the glover. 'I am ashamed so idle a tongue as thine should have power to move me thus.' 'Idiot—beast—loose-tongued coxcomb!' he exclaimed, throwing himself into a chair, as the bonnet-maker disappeared, 'that a fellow made up of lies should not have had the grace to frame one when it might have covered the shame of a friend! And I—what am I, that I should, in my secret mind, wish that such a gross insult to me and my child had been glossed over? Yet such was my opinion of Henry, that I would have willingly believed the grossest figment the swaggering ass could have invented. Well, it skills not thinking of it. Our honest name must be maintained, though everything else should go to ruin'

While the glover thus moralised on the unwelcome confirmation of the tale he wished to think untrue, the expelled morrice-dancer had leisure, in the composing air of a cool and dark February night, to meditate on the consequences of the glover's unrestrained anger.

'But it is nothing,' he bethought himself, 'to the wrath of Henry Wynd, who hath killed a man for much less than placing displeasure betwixt him and Catharine, as well as her fiery old father. Certainly I were better have denied everything. But the humour of seeming a knowing gallant, as in truth I am, fairly overcame me. Were I best go to finish the revel at the Griffin? But then Maudie will rampage on my return—

ay, and this being holiday even, I may claim a privilege. I have it I will not to the Griffin — I will to the smith's, who must be at home, since no one hath seen him this day amid the revel. I will endeavour to make peace with him, and offer my intercession with the glover. Harry is a simple, downright fellow, and though I think he is my better in a broil, yet in discourse I can turn him my own way. The streets are now quiet, the night, too, is dark, and I may step aside if I meet any rioters. I will to the smith's, and, securing him for my friend, I care little for old Simon. St. Ringan bear me well through this night, and I will clasp my tongue out ere it shall run my head into such peril again! Yonder old fellow, when his blood was up, looked more like a carver of buff-jerkins than a clipper of kid gloves.'

With these reflections, the puissant Oliver walked swiftly, yet with as little noise as possible, towards the wynd in which the smith, as our readers are aware, had his habitation. But his evil fortune had not ceased to pursue him. As he turned into the High, or principal, Street, he heard a burst of music very near him, followed by a loud shout.

'My merry mates, the morrice-dancers,' thought he, 'I would know old Jeremy's rebeck among an hundred. I will venture across the street ere they pass on, if I am espied, I shall have the renown of some private quest, which may do me honour as a roving blade.'

With these longings for distinction among the gay and gallant, combated, however, internally, by more prudential considerations, the bonnet-maker made an attempt to cross the street. But the revellers, whoever they might be, were accompanied by torches, the flash of which fell upon Oliver, whose light-coloured habit made him the more distinctly visible. The general shout of 'A prize — a prize' overcame the noise of the minstrel, and before the bonnet-maker could determine whether it were better to stand or fly, two active young men, clad in fantastic masking habits, resembling wild men, and holding great clubs, seized upon him, saying, in a tragical tone, 'Yield thee, man of bells and bombast — yield thee, rescue or no rescue, or truly thou art but a dead morrice dancer.'

'To whom shall I yield me?' said the bonnet-maker, with a faltering voice, for, though he saw he had to do with a party of mummers who were a-foot for pleasure, yet he observed at the same time that they were far above his class, and he lost the audacity necessary to support his part in a game where the inferior was likely to come by the worst.

'Dost thou parley, slave?' answered one of the maskers; 'and must I show thee that thou art a captive, by giving thee incontinently the bastinado?'

'By no means, puissant man of Ind,' said the bonnet-maker, 'lo, I am conformable to your pleasure'

'Come, then,' said those who had arrested him — 'come and do homage to the Emperor of Mimes, King of Caperers, and Grand Duke of the Dark Housis, and explain by what right thou art so presumptuous as to prance and jingle, and wear out shoe-leather, within his dominions without paying him tribute. Know'st thou not thou hast incurred the pains of high-treason?'

'That were hard, methinks,' said poor Oliver, 'since I knew not that his Grace exercised the government this evening. But I am willing to redeem the forfeit, if the purse of a poor bonnet-maker may, by the mulct of a gallon of wine, or some such matter'

'Bring him before the emperor,' was the universal cry, and the morrice-dancer was placed before a slight, but easy and handsome, figure of a young man, splendidly attired, having a cincture and tiara of peacock's feathers, then brought from the East as a marvellous rarity, a short jacket and under-dress of leopard's skin fitted closely the rest of his person, which was attired in flesh-coloured silk, so as to resemble the ordinary idea of an Indian prince. He wore sandals, fastened on with ribands of scarlet silk, and held in his hand a sort of fan, such as ladies then used, composed of the same feathers, assembled into a plume or tuft.

'What mister wight have we here,' said the Indian chief, 'who dares to tie the bells of a morrice on the ankles of a dull ass? Hark ye, friend, your dress should make you a subject of ours, since our empire extends over all Merryland, including mimes and minstrels of every description. What, tongue-tied? He lacks wine, minister to him our nutshell full of sack.'

A huge calabash full of sack was offered to the lips of the supplicant, while this prince of revellers exhorted him —

'Crack me this nut, and do it handsomely, and without wry faces'

But, however Oliver might have relished a moderate sip of the same good wine, he was terrified at the quantity he was required to deal with. He drank a draught, and then entreated for mercy.

'So please your princedom, I have yet far to go, and if I were to swallow your Grace's bounty, for which accept my

dutiful thanks, I should not be able to stride over the next kennel.'

'Art thou in case to bear thyself like a galliard? Now, cut me a caper—hal one—two—three—admirable! Again—give him the spur (here a satellite of the Indian gave Oliver a slight touch with his sword) Nay, that is best of all he sprang like a cat in a gutter 'Tender him the nut once more, nay, no compulsion, he has paid forfeit, and deserves not only free dismissal but reward. Kneel down—kneel, and arise Sir Knight of the Calabash! What is thy name? And one of you lend me a rapier'

'Olver, may it please your honour—I mean your principality'

'Olver, man! Nay, then thou art one of the "douze peers" already, and fate has forestalled our intended promotion. Yet rise up, sweet Sir Olver Thatchpate, Knight of the honourable order of the Pumpkin—rise up, in the name of nonsense, and begone about thine own concerns, and the devil go with thee.'

So saying, the prince of the revels bestowed a smart blow with the flat of the weapon across the bonnet-maker's shoulders, who sprung to his feet with more alacrity of motion than he had hitherto displayed, and, accelerated by the laugh and halloo which arose behind him, arrived at the smith's house before he stopped, with the same speed with which a hunted fox makes for his den.

It was not till the affrighted bonnet-maker had struck a blow on the door that he recollected he ought to have thought himself beforehand in what manner he was to present himself before Henry, and obtain his forgiveness for his rash communications to Simon Glover. No one answered to his first knock, and, perhaps, as these reflections arose in the momentary pause of recollection which circumstances permitted, the perplexed bonnet-maker might have flinched from his purpose, and made his retreat to his own premises, without venturing upon the interview which he had purposed. But a distant strain of minstrelsy revived his apprehensions of falling once more into the hands of the gay maskers from whom he had escaped, and he renewed his summons on the door of the smith's dwelling with a hurried, though faltering, hand. He was then appalled by the deep, yet not unmusical, voice of Henry Gow, who answered from within—'Who calls at this hour, and what is it that you want?'

‘It is I — Oliver Proudfoot,’ replied the bonnet-maker, ‘I have a merry jest to tell you, gossip Henry’

‘Carry thy foolery to some other market I am in no jesting humour,’ said Henry ‘Go hence, I will see no one to-night’

‘But, gossip — good gossip,’ answered the martialist without, ‘I am beset with villains, and beg the shelter of your roof!’

‘Fool that thou art!’ replied Henry, ‘no dunghill cock, the most recreant that has fought this Fasten’s Eve, would ruffle his feathers at such a craven as thou!’

At this moment another strain of minstrelsy, and, as the bonnet-maker concerted, one which approached much nearer, goaded his apprehensions to the uttermost, and in a voice the tones of which expressed the undisguised extremity of instant fear he exclaimed —

‘For the sake of our old gossipred, and for the love of Our Blessed Lady, admit me, Henry, if you would not have me found a bloody corpse at thy door, slain by the bloody-minded Douglasses!’

‘That would be a shame to me,’ thought the good-natured smith, ‘and sooth to say, his peril may be real. There are roving hawks that will strike at a sparrow as soon as a heron’

With these reflections, half-muttered, half-spoken, Henry undid his well-fastened door, proposing to reconnoitre the reality of the danger before he permitted his unwelcome guest to enter the house. But as he looked abroad to ascertain how matters stood, Oliver bolted in like a scared deer into a thicket, and harboured himself by the smith’s kitchen fire before Henry could look up and down the lane, and satisfy himself there were no enemies in pursuit of the apprehensive fugitive. He secured his door, therefore, and returned into the kitchen, displeased that he had suffered his gloomy solitude to be intruded upon by sympathising with apprehensions which he thought he might have known were so easily excited as those of his timid townsman.

‘How now!’ he said, coldly enough, when he saw the bonnet-maker calmly seated by his hearth. ‘What foolish revel is this, Master Oliver? I see no one near to harm you’

‘Give me a drink, kind gossip,’ said Oliver ‘I am choked with the haste I have made to come hither’

‘I have sworn,’ said Henry, ‘that this shall be no revel night in this house. I am in my work-day clothes, as you see, and keep fast, as I have reason, instead of holiday. You have had

wassail enough for the holiday evening, for you speak thick already. If you wish more ale or wine you must go elsewhere.'

'I have had over much wassail already,' said poor Oliver, 'and have been wellnigh drowned in it. That accursed calabash! A draught of water, kind gossip — you will not surely let me ask for that in vain? or, if it is your will, a cup of cold small ale.'

'Nay, if that be all,' said Henry, 'it shall not be lacking. But it must have been much which brought thee to the pass of asking for either.'

So saying, he filled a quart flagon from a barrel that stood nigh, and presented it to his guest. Oliver eagerly accepted it, raised it to his head with a trembling hand, imbibed the contents with lips which quivered with emotion, and, though the potation was as thin as he had requested, so much was he exhausted with the combined fears of alarm and of former revelry, that, when he placed the flagon on the oak table, he uttered a deep sigh of satisfaction, and remained silent.

'Well, now you have had your draught, gossip,' said the smith, 'what is it you want? Where are those that threatened you? I could see no one.'

'No — but there were twenty chased me into the wynd,' said Oliver. 'But when they saw us together, you know they lost the courage that brought all of them upon one of us.'

'Nay, do not trifle, friend Oliver,' replied his host, 'my mood lies not that way.'

'I jest not, by St. John of Perth. I have been stayed and foully outraged (gliding his hand sensitively over the place affected) by mad David of Rothsay, roaring Ramorny, and the rest of them. They made me drink a firkin of Malvoisie.'

'Thou speakest folly, man. Ramorny is sick nigh to death, as the potter-carrier everywhere reports: they and he cannot surely rise at midnight to do such frolics.'

'I cannot tell,' replied Oliver, 'but I saw the party by torch light, and I can make bodily oath to the bonnets I made for them since last Innocents.' 'They are of a quaint device, and I should know my own stitch.'

'Well, thou mayst have had wrong,' answered Henry. 'If thou art in real danger, I will cause them get a bed for thee here. But you must fill it presently, for I am not in the humour of talking.'

'Nay, I would thank thee for my quarters for a night, only

my Maudie will be angry — that is, not angry, for that I care not for — but the truth is, she is over-anxious on a revel night like this, knowing my humour is like thine for a word and a blow'

'Why, then, go home,' said the smith, 'and show her that her treasure is in safety, Master Oliver, the streets are quiet, and, to speak a blunt word, I would be alone'

'Nay, but I have things to speak with thee about of moment,' replied Oliver, who, afraid to stay, seemed yet unwilling to go. 'There has been a stir in our city council about the affair of St Valentine's Even. The provost told me not four hours since, that the Douglas and he had agreed that the feud should be decided by a yeoman on either part, and that our acquaintance, the Devil's Dick, was to wave his gentry, and take up the cause for Douglas and the nobles, and that you or I should fight for the Fan City. Now, though I am the elder burgess, yet I am willing, for the love and kindness we have always borne to each other, to give thee the precedence, and content myself with the humbler office of stickler'¹

Henry Smith, though angry, could scarce forbear a smile

'If it is that which breaks thy quiet, and keeps thee out of thy bed at midnight, I will make the matter easy. Thou shalt not lose the advantage offered thee. I have fought a score of duels — far, far too many. Thou hast, I think, only encountered with thy wooden soldan. It were unjust — unfair — unkind — in me to abuse thy friendly offer. So go home, good fellow, and let not the fear of losing honour disturb thy slumbers. Rest assured that thou shalt answer the challenge, as good right thou hast, having had injury from this rough-rider'

'Gramercy, and thank thee kindly,' said Oliver, much embarrassed by his friend's unexpected deference, 'thou art the good friend I have always thought thee. But I have as much friendship for Henry Smith as he for Oliver Proudfoot. I swear by St John, I will not fight in this quarrel to thy prejudice, so, having said so, I am beyond the reach of temptation, since thou wouldst not have me mansworn, though it were to fight twenty duels'

'Hark thee,' said the smith, 'acknowledge thou art afraid, Oliver. Tell the honest truth, at once, otherwise I leave thee to make the best of thy quarrel'

'Nay, good gossip,' replied the bonnet-maker, 'thou knowest I am never afraid. But, in sooth, this is a desperate ruffian,

¹ See Note 33

and as I have a wife — poor Maudie, thou knowest — and a small family, and thou —

‘And I,’ interrupted Henry, hastily, ‘have none, and never shall have.’

‘Why, truly, such being the case, I would rather thou fought’st this combat than I.’

‘Now, by our holidame, gossip,’ answered the smith, ‘thou art easily gulled!’ Know, thou silly fellow, that Sir Patrick Charteris, who is ever a merry man, hath but jested with thee. Dost thou think he would venture the honour of the city on thy head, or that I would yield thee the precedence in which such a matter was to be disputed? Lack a day, go home, let Maudie tie a warm nightcap on thy head, get thee a warm breakfast and a cup of distilled waters, and thou wilt be in case to-morrow to fight thy wooden dromond, or soldan, as thou call’st him, the only thing thou wilt ever lay downright blow upon.’

‘Ay, say’st thou so, comrade?’ answered Oliver, much relieved, yet deeming it necessary to seem in part offended. ‘I care not for thy dogged humour, it is well for thee thou canst not wake my patience to the point of falling foul. Enough — we are gossips, and this house is thine. Why should the two best blades in Perth clash with each other? What! I know thy rugged humour, and can forgive it. But is the feud really soldered up?’

‘As completely as ever hammer fixed rivet,’ said the smith. ‘The town hath given the Johnstone a purse of gold, for not ridding them of a troublesome fellow called Oliver Proudfeet, when he had him at his mercy, and this purse of gold buys for the provost the Sleepless Isle, which the King grants him, for the King pays all in the long run. And thus, Sir Patrick gets the comely inch which is opposite to his dwelling, and all honour is saved on both sides, for what is given to the provost is given, you understand, to the town. Besides all this, the Douglas hath left Perth to march against the Southron, who, men say, are called into the marches by the false Earl of March. So the Fair City is quit of him and his cumber.’

‘But, in St. John’s name, how came all that about,’ said Oliver, ‘and no one spoken to about it?’

‘Why, look thee, friend Oliver, this I take to have been the case. The fellow whom I cropped of a hand is now said to have been a servant of Sir John Ramorny’s, who hath fled to his motherland of Fife, to which Sir John himself is also to be

banished, with full consent of every honest man. Now, anything which brings in Sir John Ramouny touches a much greater man—I think Simon Glover told as much to Sir Patrick Charteris. If it be as I guess, I have reason to thank Heaven and all the saints I stabbed him not upon the ladder when I made him prisoner.

‘And I too thank Heaven and all the saints, most devoutly,’ said Oliver. ‘I was behind thee, thou knowest, and ——’

‘No more of that, if thou be’st wise. There are laws against striking princes,’ said the smith. ‘best not handle the horseshoe till it cools. All is hushed up now.’

‘If this be so,’ said Oliver, partly disconcerted, but still more relieved, by the intelligence he received from his better-informed friend, ‘I have reason to complain of Sir Patrick Charteris for jesting with the honour of an honest burgess, being, as he is, provost of our town.’

‘Do, Oliver, challenge him to the field, and he will bid his yeoman loose his dogs on thee. But come, night wears apace, will you be shogging?’

‘Nay, I had one word more to say to thee, good gossip. But first, another cup of your cold ale.’

‘Pest on thee for a fool! Thou makest me wish thee where cold liquors are a scarce commodity. There, swill the barrellful an thou wilt.’

Oliver took the second flagon, but drank, or rather seemed to drink, very slowly, in order to gain time for considering how he should introduce his second subject of conversation, which seemed rather delicate for the smith’s present state of irritability. At length, nothing better occurred to him than to plunge into the subject at once, with, ‘I have seen Simon Glover to-day, gossip.’

‘Well,’ said the smith, in a low, deep, and stern tone of voice, ‘and if thou hast, what is that to me?’

‘Nothing—nothing,’ answered the appalled bonnet-maker. ‘Only I thought you might like to know that he questioned me close if I had seen thee on St Valentine’s Day, after the uproar at the Dominicans’, and in what company thou wert.’

‘And I warrant thou told’st him thou met’st me with a glee-woman in the mirk loaning yonder?’

‘Thou know’st, Henry, I have no gift at lying, but I made it all up with him.’

‘As how, I pray you?’ said the smith.

‘Marry, thus—“Father Simon,” said I, “you are an old

man, and know not the quality of us, in whose veins youth is like quicksilver. You think, now, he cares about this girl," said I, "and, perhaps, that he has her somewhere here in Perth in a corner? No such matter, I know," said I, "and I will make oath to it, that she left his house early next morning for Dundee." Ha! have I helped thee at need?

'Truly, I think thou hast, and if anything could add to my grief and vexation at this moment, it is that, when I am so deep in the mire, an ass like thee should place his clumsy hoof on my head, to sink me entirely. Come, away with thee, and mayst thou have such luck as thy meddling humour deserves, and then, I think, thou wilt be found with a broken neck in the next gutter. Come, get you out, or I will put you to the door with head and shoulders forward.'

'Ha — ha!' exclaimed Oliver, laughing with some constraint, 'thou art such a groom! But in sadness, gossip Henry, wilt thou not take a turn with me to my own house, in the Meal Vennel?'

'Curse thee, no,' answered the smith.

'I will bestow the wine on thee if thou wilt go,' said Oliver.

'I will bestow the cudgel on thee if thou stay'st,' said Henry.

'Nay, then, I will don thy buff coat and cap of steel, and walk with thy swashing step, and whistling thy pibroch of "Broken Bones at Loncarty", and if they take me for thee, there dare not four of them come near me.'

'Take all or anything thou wilt, in the fiend's name! only be gone.'

'Well — well, Hal, we shall meet when thou art in better humour,' said Oliver, who had put on the dress.

'Go, and may I never see thy coxcombly face again.'

Oliver at last relieved his host by swaggering off, imitating, as well as he could, the sturdy step and outward gesture of his redoubted companion, and whistling a pibroch, composed on the rout of the Danes at Loncarty, which he had picked up from its being a favourite of the smith's, whom he made a point of imitating as far as he could. But as the innocent, though concerted, fellow stepped out from the entrance of the wynd, where it communicated with the High Street, he received a blow from behind, against which his head-piece was no defence, and he fell dead upon the spot, an attempt to mutter the name of Henry, to whom he always looked for protection, quivering upon his dying tongue.

CHAPTER XVII

Nay, I will fit you for a young prince

Fullstaff

WE return to the revellers, who had, half an hour before, witnessed, with such boisterous applause, Oliver's feat of agility, being the last which the poor bonnet-maker was ever to exhibit, and at the hasty retreat which had followed it, animated by their wild shout. After they had laughed their fill, they passed on their mirthful path in frolic and jubilee, stopping and frightening some of the people whom they met, but, it must be owned, without doing them any serious injury, either in their persons or feelings. At length, tired with his rambles, their chief gave a signal to his merry-men to close around him

'We, my brave hearts and wise counsellors, are,' he said, 'the real king¹ over all in Scotland that is worth commanding. We sway the hours when the wine-cup circulates, and when beauty becomes kind, when frolic is awake, and gravity snoring upon his pallet. We leave to our vicegerent, King Robert, the weary task of controlling ambitious nobles, gratifying greedy clergymen, subduing wild Highlanders, and composing deadly feuds. And since our empire is one of joy and pleasure, meet it is that we should haste with all our forces to the rescue of such as own our sway, when they chance, by evil fortune, to become the prisoners of care and hypochondriac malady. I speak in relation chiefly to Sir John, whom the vulgar call Ramorny. We have not seen him since the onslaught of Curfew Street, and though we know he was somewhat hurt in that matter, we cannot see why he should not do homage in leal and duteous sort. Here, you, our Calabash King-at-arms, did you legally summon Sir John to his part of this evening's revels?'

'I did, my lord'

'And did you acquaint him that we have for this night suspended his sentence of banishment, that, since higher

¹ See Mumming Dignitaries Note 34

powers have settled that part, we might at least take a mirthful leave of an old friend ?'

'I so delivered it, my lord,' answered the muncie herald

'And sent he not a word in writing, he that piques himself upon being so great a clerk ?'

'He was in bed, my lord, and I might not see him. So far as I hear, he hath lived very retired, harmed with some bodily bruises, malcontent with your Highness's displeasure, and doubting insult in the streets, he having had a narrow escape from the burgesses, when the churls pursued him and his two servants into the Dominican convent. The servants, too, have been removed to Fife, lest they should tell tales'

'Why, it was wisely done,' said the Prince, who, we need not inform the intelligent reader, had a better title to be so called than arose from the humours of the evening—'it was prudently done to keep light-tongued companions out of the way. But Sir John's absenting himself from our solemn revels, so long before decreed, is flat mutiny and disavowal of allegiance. Or, if the knight be really the prisoner of illness and melancholy, we must ourselves grace him with a visit, seeing there can be no better cure for those maladies than our own presence, and a gentle kiss of the calabash. Forward, ushers, minstrels, guard, and attendants! Bear on high the great emblem of our dignity. Up with the calabash, I say! and let the merry men who carry these firkins, which are to supply the wine cup with their life blood, be chosen with regard to their state of steadiness. Their burden is weighty and precious, and if the fault is not in our eyes, they seem to us to reel and stagger more than were desirable. Now, move on, sirs, and let our minstrels blow their blythest and boldest.'

On they went with tipsy mirth and jollity, the numerous torches flashing their red light against the small windows of the narrow streets, from whence nightcapped householders, and sometimes their wives to boot, peeped out by stealth to see what wild wassail disturbed the peaceful streets at that unwonted hour. At length the jolly train halted before the door of Sir John Ramorny's house, which a small court divided from the street.

Here they knocked, thundered, and halloo'd, with many denunciations of vengeance against the recusants who refused to open the gates. The least punishment threatened was imprisonment in an empty hogshead, within the massamore¹ of the

¹ See Note 35

Prince of Pastimes' feudal palace, videlicet, the ale-cellar. But Eviot, Ramorny's page, heard and knew well the character of the intruders who knocked so boldly, and thought it better, considering his master's condition, to make no answer at all, in hopes that the revel would pass on, than to attempt to deprecate their proceedings, which he knew would be to no purpose. His master's bedroom looking into a little garden, his page hoped he might not be disturbed by the noise, and he was confident in the strength of the outward gate, upon which he resolved they should beat till they tired themselves, or till the tone of their drunken humour should change. The revellers accordingly seemed likely to exhaust themselves in the noise they made by shouting and beating the door, when their mock prince (alas! too really such) upbraided them as lazy and dull followers of the god of wine and of mirth.

'Bring forward,' he said, 'our key, yonder it lies, and apply it to this rebellious gate.'

The key he pointed at was a large beam of wood, left on one side of the street, with the usual neglect of order characteristic of a Scottish borough of the period.

The shouting men of Ind instantly raised it in their arms, and, supporting it by their united strength, ran against the door with such force, that hasp, hinge, and staple jingled, and gave fair promise of yielding. Eviot did not choose to wait the extremity of this battery—he came forth into the court, and after some momentary questions for form's sake, caused the porter to undo the gate, as if he had for the first time recognised the midnight visitors.

'False slave of an unfaithful master,' said the Prince, 'where is our disloyal subject, Sir John Ramorny, who has proved recreant to our summons?'

'My lord,' said Eviot, bowing at once to the real and to the assumed dignity of the leader, 'my master is just now very much indisposed—he has taken an opiate—and—your Highness must excuse me if I do my duty to him in saying, he cannot be spoken with without danger of his life.'

'Tush! tell me not of danger, Master Teviot—Cheviot—Eviot—what is it they call thee? But show me thy master's chamber, or rather undo me the door of his lodging, and I will make a good guess at it myself. Bear high the calabash, my brave followers, and see that you spill not a drop of the liquor, which Dan Bacchus has sent for the cure of all diseases of the body and cares of the mind. Advance it, I

say, and let us see the holy rind which incloses such precious liquor'

The Prince made his way into the house accordingly, and, acquainted with its interior, ran upstairs, followed by Eviot, in vain imploring silence, and, with the rest of the rabble rout, burst into the room of the wounded master of the lodging.

He who has experienced the sensation of being compelled to sleep in spite of racking bodily pains, by the administration of a strong opiate, and of having been again startled by noise and violence out of the unnatural state of insensibility in which he had been plunged by the potency of the medicine, may be able to imagine the confused and alarmed state of Sir John Ramorny's mind, and the agony of his body, which acted and reacted upon each other. If we add to these feelings the consciousness of a criminal command, sent forth and in the act of being executed, it may give us some idea of an awakening to which, in the mind of the party, eternal sleep would be a far preferable doom. The groan which he uttered as the first symptom of returning sensation had something in it so terrific, that even the revellers were awed into momentary silence, and as, from the half-recumbent posture in which he had gone to sleep, he looked around the room, filled with fantastic shapes, rendered still more so by his disturbed intellects, he muttered to himself—

'It is thus, then, after all, and the legend is true! These are fiends, and I am condemned for ever! The fire is not external, but I feel it—I feel it at my heart—burning as if the seven times heated furnace were doing its work within!'

While he cast ghastly looks around him, and struggled to recover some share of recollection, Eviot approached the Prince, and, falling on his knees, implored him to allow the apartment to be cleared.

'It may,' he said, 'cost my master his life.'

'Never fear, Cheviot,' replied the Duke of Rothsay, 'were he at the gates of death, here is what should make the fiends relinquish their prey. Advance the calabash, my masters.'

'It is death for him to taste it in his present state,' said Eviot 'if he drinks wine he dies.'

'Some one must drink it for him—he shall be cured vicariously, and may our great Dan Bacchus deign to Sir John Ramorny the comfort, the elevation of heart, the lubrication of lungs, and lightness of fancy, which are his choicest gifts, while the faithful follower, who quaffs in his stead, shall have the

qualms, the sickness, the racking of the nerves, the dimness of the eyes, and the throbbing of the brain, with which our great master qualifies gifts which would else make us too like the gods. What say you, Eviot? will you be the faithful follower that will quaff in your lord's behalf, and as his representative? Do this, and we will hold ourselves contented to depart, for, methinks, our subject doth look something ghastly.'

'I would do anything in my slight power,' said Eviot, 'to save my master from a draught which may be his death, and your Grace from the sense that you had occasioned it. But here is one who will perform the feat of good-will, and thank your Highness to boot.'

'Whom have we here?' said the Prince, 'a butcher, and I think fresh from his office. Do butchers ply their craft on Fastern's Eve? Foh, how he smells of blood!'

This was spoken of Bonthron, who, partly surprised at the tumult in the house, where he had expected to find all dark and silent, and partly stupid through the wine which the wretch had drunk in great quantities, stood in the threshold of the door, staring at the scene before him, with his buff-coat splashed with blood, and a bloody axe in his hand, exhibiting a ghastly and disgusting spectacle to the revellers, who felt, though they could not tell why, fear as well as dislike at his presence.

As they approached the calabash to this ungainly and truculent-looking savage, and as he extended a hand soiled, as it seemed, with blood, to grasp it, the Prince called out—

'Downstairs with him! let not the wretch drink in our presence, find him some other vessel than our holy calabash, the emblem of our revels. A swine's trough were best, if it could be come by. Away with him! let him be drenched to purpose, in atonement for his master's sobriety. Leave me alone with Sir John Ramorny and his page, by my honour, I like not yon ruffian's looks.'

The attendants of the Prince left the apartment, and Eviot alone remained.

'I fear,' said the Prince, approaching the bed in different form from that which he had hitherto used — 'I fear, my dear Sir John, that this visit has been unwelcome, but it is your own fault. Although you know our old wont, and were yourself participant of our schemes for the evening, you have not come near us since St Valentine's, it is now Fastern's Even, and the desertion is flat disobedience and treason to our kingdom of mirth and the statutes of the calabash.'

Ramorny raised his head, and fixed a wavering eye upon the Prince, then signed to Eviot to give him something to drink. A large cup of ptisan was presented by the page, which the sick man swallowed with eager and trembling haste. He then repeatedly used the stimulating essence left for the purpose by the leech, and seemed to collect his scattered senses.

'Let me feel your pulse, dear Ramorny,' said the Prince, 'I know something of that craft. How! Do you offer me the left hand, Sir John? that is neither according to the rules of medicine nor of courtesy.'

'The right has already done its last act in your Highness's service,' muttered the patient in a low and broken tone.

'How mean you by that?' said the Prince. 'I am aware thy follower, Black Quentin, lost a hand, but he can steal with the other as much as will bring him to the gallows, so his fate cannot be much altered.'

'It is not that fellow who has had the loss in your Grace's service—it is I, John of Ramorny.'

'You!' said the Prince, 'you jest with me, or the opiate still masters your reason.'

'If the juice of all the poppies in Egypt were blended in one draught,' said Ramorny, 'it would lose influence over me when I look upon this.' He drew his right arm from beneath the cover of the bedclothes, and extending it towards the Prince, wrapped as it was in dressings, 'Were these undone and removed,' he said, 'your Highness would see that a bloody stump is all that remains of a hand ever ready to unsheathe the sword at your Grace's slightest bidding.'

Rothsay started back in horror. 'Thus,' he said, 'must be avenged!'

'It is avenged in small part,' said Ramorny—'that is, I thought I saw Bonthron but now, or was it that the dream of hell that first arose in my mind when I awakened summoned up an image so congenial? Eviot, call the miscreant—that is, if he is fit to appear.'

Eviot retired, and presently returned with Bonthron, whom he had rescued from the penance, to him no unpleasing infliction, of a second calabash of wine, the brute having gorged the first without much apparent alteration in his demeanour.

'Eviot,' said the Prince, 'let not that beast come nigh me. My soul recoils from him in fear and disgust. There is something in his looks alien from my nature, and which I shudder at as at a loathsome snake, from which my instinct revolts.'

'First hear him speak, my lord,' answered Ramorny; 'unless a wine-skin were to talk, nothing could use fewer words. Hast thou dealt with him, Bonthron?'

The savage raised the axe which he still held in his hand, and brought it down again edgeways

'Good How knew you your man? the night, I am told, is dark'

'By sight and sound, garb, gait, and whistle'

'Enough, vanish! and, Eviot, let him have gold and wine to his brutish contentment Vanish! and go thou with him'

'And whose death is achieved?' said the Prince, released from the feelings of disgust and horror under which he suffered while the assassin was in presence 'I trust this is but a jest! Else must I call it a rash and savage deed. Who has had the hard lot to be butchered by that bloody and brutal slave?'

'One little better than himself,' said the patient, 'a wretched artisan, to whom, however, fate gave the power of reducing Ramorny to a mutilated cripple—a curse go with his base spirit! His miserable life is but to my revenge what a drop of water would be to a furnace I must speak briefly, for my ideas again wander it is only the necessity of the moment which keeps them together, as a thong combines a handful of arrows You are in danger, my lord—I speak it with certainty you have braved Douglas, and offended your uncle, displeased your father, though that were a trifle, were it not for the rest'

'I am sorry I have displeased my father,' said the Prince, entirely diverted from so insignificant a thing as the slaughter of an artisan by the more important subject touched upon, 'if indeed it be so But if I live, the strength of the Douglas shall be broken, and the craft of Albany shall little avail him!'

'Ay—*if*—*if* My lord,' said Ramorny, 'with such opposites as you have, you must not rest upon *if* or *but* you must resolve at once to slay or be slain'

'How mean you, Ramorny? your fever makes you rave,' answered the Duke of Rothsay

'No, my lord,' said Ramorny, 'were my frenzy at the highest, the thoughts that pass through my mind at this moment would qualify it It may be that regret for my own loss has made me desperate, that anxious thoughts for your Highness's safety have made me nourish bold designs, but I have all the judgment with which Heaven has gifted me, when I tell you that, if ever you would brook the Scottish crown, nay, more, if ever you would see another St Valentine's Day, you must——'

'What is it that I must do, Ramorny?' said the Prince, with an air of dignity, 'nothing unworthy of myself, I hope?'

'Nothing, certainly, unworthy or misbecoming a prince of Scotland, if the blood-stained annals of our country tell the tale truly, but that which may well shock the nerves of a prince of mimes and merry makers'

'Thou art severe, Sir John Ramorny,' said the Duke of Rothsay, with an air of displeasure, 'but thou hast dearly bought a right to censure us by what thou hast lost in our cause'

'My Lord of Rothsay,' said the knight, 'the chirurgion who dressed this mutilated stump told me that the more I felt the pain his knife and brand inflicted, the better was my chance of recovery I shall not, therefore, hesitate to hurt your feelings, while by doing so I may be able to bring you to a sense of what is necessary for your safety Your Grace has been the pupil of mirthful folly too long, you must now assume manly policy, or be crushed like a butterfly on the bosom of the flower you are sporting on.'

'I think I know your cast of morals, Sir John you are weary of merry folly — the churchmen call it vice — and long for a little serious crime. A murder, now, or a massacre, would enhance the flavour of debauch, as the taste of the olive gives zest to wine. But my worst acts are but merry malice I have no relish for the bloody trade, and abhor to see or hear of its being acted even on the meanest caitiff Should I ever fill the throne, I suppose, like my father before me, I must drop my own name, and be dubbed Robert, in honour of the Bruce, well, an if it be so, every Scots lad shall have his flagon in one hand and the other around his lass's neck, and manhood shall be tried by kisses and bumpers, not by dirks and dourlachs, and they shall write on my grave, "Here lies Robert, fourth of his name. He won not battles like Robert the First. He rose not from a count to a king like Robert the Second. He founded not churches like Robert the Third, but was contented to live and die king of good fellows!" Of all my two centuries of ancestors, I would only emulate the fame of

Old King Coull,
Who had a brown bowl'

'My gracious lord,' said Ramorny, 'let me remind you that your joyous revels involve serious evils If I had lost this hand in fighting to attain for your Grace some important ad-

vantage over your too powerful enemies, the loss would never have grieved me. But to be reduced from helmet and steel-coat to biggin and gown in a night-brawl ——'

'Why, there again now, Sir John,' interrupted the reckless Prince. 'How canst thou be so unworthy as to be for ever flinging thy bloody hand in my face, as the ghost of Gask-hall threw his head at Sir William Wallace?'¹ Bethink thee, thou art more unreasonable than Fawdyeon himself, for wight Wallace had swept his head off in somewhat a hasty humour, whereas I would gladly stick thy hand on again, were that possible. And, hark thee, since that cannot be, I will get thee such a substitute as the steel hand of the old knight of Carslogie, with which he greeted his friends, caressed his wife, braved his antagonists, and did all that might be done by a hand of flesh and blood, in offence or defence. Depend on it, John Ramorny, we have much that is superfluous about us. Man can see with one eye, hear with one ear, touch with one hand, smell with one nostril, and why we should have two of each, unless to supply an accidental loss or injury, I for one am at a loss to conceive.'

Sir John Ramorny turned from the Prince with a low groan.

'Nay, Sir John,' said the Duke, 'I am quite serious. You know the truth touching the legend of Steel-hand of Carslogie better than I, since he was your own neighbour. In his time that curious engine could only be made in Rome, but I will wager an hundred merks with you that, let the Perth armourer have the use of it for a pattern, Henry of the Wynd will execute as complete an imitation as all the smiths in Rome could accomplish, with all the cardinals to bid a blessing on the work.'

'I could venture to accept your wager, my lord,' answered Ramorny, bitterly, 'but there is no time for foolery. You have dismissed me from your service, at command of your uncle?'

'At command of my father,' answered the Prince.

'Upon whom your uncle's commands are imperative,' replied Ramorny. 'I am a disgraced man, thrown aside, as I may now fling away my right-hand glove, as a thing useless. Yet my head might help you, though my hand be gone. Is your Grace disposed to listen to me for one word of serious import, for I am much exhausted, and feel my force sinking under me?'

'Speak your pleasure,' said the Prince, 'thy loss binds me

¹ The passage referred to is perhaps the most poetical one in *Blind Harry's Wallace*, Book v. 170-220.

to hear thee, thy bloody stump is a sceptre to control me. Speak, then, but be merciful in thy strength of privilege.'

'I will be brief for mine own sake as well as thine, indeed, I have but little to say. Douglas places himself immediately at the head of his vassals. He will assemble, in the name of King Robert, thirty thousand Borderers, whom he will shortly after lead into the interior, to demand that the Duke of Rothsay receive, or rather restore, his daughter to the rank and privileges of his Duchess. King Robert will yield to any conditions which may secure peace. What will the Duke do?'

'The Duke of Rothsay loves peace,' said the Prince, haughtily, 'but he never feared war. Ere he takes back yonder proud peat to his table and his bed, at the command of her father, Douglas must be King of Scotland.'

'Be it so, but even this is the less pressing peril, especially as it threatens open violence, for the Douglas works not in secret.'

'What is there which presses, and keeps us awake at this late hour? I am a weary man, thou a wounded one, and the very tapers are blinking, as if tired of our conference.'

'Tell me, then, who is it that rules this kingdom of Scotland?' said Ramorny.

'Robert, third of the name,' said the Prince, raising his bonnet as he spoke, 'and long may he sway the sceptre!'

'True, and amen,' answered Ramorny, 'but who sways King Robert, and dictates almost every measure which the good King pursues?'

'My Lord of Albany, you would say,' replied the Prince. 'Yes, it is true my father is guided almost entirely by the counsels of his brother, nor can we blame him in our consciences, Sir John Ramorny, for little help hath he had from his son.'

'Let us help him now, my lord,' said Ramorny. 'I am possessor of a dreadful secret. Albany hath been trafficking with me, to join him in taking your Grace's life! He offers full pardon for the past, high favour for the future.'

'How, man — my life? I trust, though, thou dost only mean my kingdom? It were impious! He is my father's brother — they sat on the knees of the same father — lay in the bosom of the same mother. Out on thee, man, what follies they make thy sick-bed believe!'

'Believe, indeed!' said Ramorny. 'It is new to me to be termed credulous. But the man through whom Albany com-

municated his temptations is one whom all will believe so soon as he hints at mischief—even the medicaments which are prepared by his hands have a relish of poison’

‘Tush! such a slave would slander a saint,’ replied the Prince. ‘Thou art duped for once, Ramorny, shrewd as thou art. My uncle of Albany is ambitious, and would secure for himself and for his house a larger portion of power and wealth than he ought in reason to desire. But to suppose he would dethrone or slay his brother’s son—— Fie, Ramorny! put me not to quote the old saw, that evil doers are evil dreaders. It is your suspicion, not your knowledge, which speaks.’

‘Your Grace is fatally deluded. I will put it to an issue. The Duke of Albany is generally hated for his greed and covetousness. Your Highness is, it may be, more beloved than——’

Ramorny stopped, the Prince calmly filled up the blank—
‘More beloved than I am honoured. It is so I would have it, Ramorny.’

‘At least,’ said Ramorny, ‘you are more beloved than you are feared, and that is no safe condition for a prince. But give me your honour and knightly word that you will not resent what good service I shall do in your behalf, and lend me your signet to engage friends in your name, and the Duke of Albany shall not assume authority in this court till the wasted hand which once terminated this stump shall be again united to the body, and acting in obedience to the dictates of my mind.’

‘You would not venture to dip your hands in royal blood?’ said the Prince, sternly.

‘Fie, my lord, at no rate. Blood need not be shed, life may, nay, will, be extinguished of itself. For want of trimming it with fresh oil, or screening it from a breath of wind, the quivering light will die in the socket. To suffer a man to die is not to kill him.’

‘True—I had forgot that policy. Well, then, suppose my uncle Albany does not continue to live—I think that must be the phrase—who then rules the court of Scotland?’

‘Robert the Third, with consent, advice, and authority of the most mighty David, Duke of Rothsay, Lieutenant of the Kingdom, and *alter ego*, in whose favour, indeed, the good King, wearied with the fatigues and troubles of sovereignty, will, I guess, be well disposed to abdicate. So long live our brave young monarch, King David the Third!’

*Ille manu fortis
Anglis ludebit in hortis.’*

'And our father and predecessor,' said Rothsay, 'will he continue to live to pray for us, as our beadsman, by whose favour he holds the privilege of laying his grey hairs in the grave as soon, and no earlier, than the course of nature permits, or must he also encounter some of those negligences in consequence of which men cease to continue to live, and exchange the limits of a prison, or of a convent resembling one, for the dark and tranquil cell, where the priests say that the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest?'

'You speak in jest, my lord,' replied Ramorny 'to harm the good old King were equally unnatural and impolitic'

'Why shrink from that, man, when thy whole scheme,' answered the Prince, in stern displeasure, 'is one lesson of unnatural guilt, mixed with short-sighted ambition? If the King of Scotland can scarcely make head against his nobles, even now when he can hold up before them an unsullied and honourable banner, who would follow a prince that is blackened with the death of an uncle and the imprisonment of a father? Why, man, thy policy were enough to revolt a heathen divan, to say nought of the council of a Christian nation. Thou wert my tutor, Ramorny, and perhaps I might justly upbraid thy lessons and example for some of the follies which men chide in me. Perhaps, if it had not been for thee, I had not been standing at midnight in this fool's guise (looking at his dress), to hear an ambitious profligate propose to me the murder of an uncle, the dethroning of the best of fathers. Since it is my fault as well as thine that has sunk me so deep in the gulf of infamy, it were unjust that thou alone shouldst die for it. But dare not to renew this theme to me, on peril of thy life! I will proclaim thee to my father—to Albany—to Scotland—throughout its length and breadth! As many market crosses as are in the land shall have morsels of the traitor's carcass, who dare counsel such horrors to the heir of Scotland. Well hope I, indeed, that the fever of thy wound, and the intoxicating influence of the cordials which act on thy infirm brain, have this night operated on thee, rather than any fixed purpose.'

'In sooth, my lord,' said Ramorny, 'if I have said anything which could so greatly exasperate your Highness, it must have been by excess of zeal, mingled with imbecility of understanding. Surely I, of all men, am least likely to propose ambitious projects with a prospect of advantage to myself! Alas! my only future views must be to exchange lance and saddle for the breviary and the confessional. The convent of Landores must

receive the maimed and impoverished knight of Ramorny, who will there have ample leisure to meditate upon the text, "Put not thy faith in princes"

'It is a goodly purpose,' said the Prince, 'and we will not be lacking to promote it. Our separation, I thought, would have been but for a time. It must now be perpetual. Certainly, after such talk as we have held, it were meet that we should live asunder. But the convent of Lindores, or whatever other house receives thee, shall be richly endowed and highly favoured by us. And now, Sir John of Ramorny, sleep—sleep—and forget this evil-omened conversation, in which the fever of disease and of wine has rather, I trust, held colloquy than your own proper thoughts. Light to the door, Eviot.'

A call from Eviot summoned the attendants of the Prince, who had been sleeping on the staircase and hall, exhausted by the revels of the evening.

'Is there none amongst you sober?' said the Duke of Rothsay, disgusted by the appearance of his attendants.

'Not a man—not a man,' answered the followers, with a drunken shout, 'we are none of us traitors to the Emperor of Merry-makers!'

'And are all of you turned into brutes, then?' said the Prince.

'In obedience and imitation of your Grace,' answered one fellow, 'or, if we are a little behind your Highness, one pull at the pitcher will——'

'Peace, beast!' said the Duke of Rothsay. 'Are there none of you sober, I say?'

'Yes, my noble liege,' was the answer, 'here is one false brother, Watkins the Englishman.'

'Come hither then, Watkins, and aid me with a torch, give me a cloak, too, and another bonnet, and take away this trumpery,' throwing down his coronet of feathers. 'I would I could throw off all my follies as easily. English Wat, attend me alone, and the rest of you end your revelry, and doff your mumming habits. The holytide is expended, and the fast has begun.'

'Our monarch has abdicated sooner than usual this night,' said one of the revel rout, but as the Prince gave no encouragement, such as happened for the time to want the virtue of sobriety endeavoured to assume it as well as they could, and the whole of the late rioters began to adopt the appearance of a set of decent persons, who, having been surprised into in-

toxication, endeavoured to disguise their condition by assuming a double portion of formality of behaviour. In the interim, the Prince, having made a hasty reform in his dress, was lighted to the door by the only sober man of the company, but, in his progress thither, had wellnigh stumbled over the sleeping bulk of the brute Bonthron.

‘How now! is that vile beast in our way once more?’ he said, in anger and disgust. ‘Here, some of you, toss this cartiff into the horse-trough, that for once in his life he may be washed clean.’

While the train executed his commands, availing themselves of a fountain which was in the outer court, and while Bonthron underwent a discipline which he was incapable of resisting, otherwise than by some inarticulate groans and snorts, like those of a dying boar, the Prince proceeded on his way to his apartments, in a mansion called the Constable’s lodgings, from the house being the property of the Earls of Errol. On the way, to divert his thoughts from the more unpleasing matters, the Prince asked his companion how he came to be sober, when the rest of the party had been so much overcome with liquor.

‘So please your honour’s Grace,’ replied English Wat, ‘I confess it was very familiar in me to be sober when it was your Grace’s pleasure that your train should be mad drunk, but in respect they were all Scottishmen but myself, I thought it argued no policy in getting drunken in their company, seeing that they only endure me even when we are all sober, and if the wine were uppermost, I might tell them a piece of my mind, and be paid with as many stabs as there are skenes in the good company.’

‘So it is your purpose never to join any of the revels of our household?’

‘Under favour, yes, unless it be your Grace’s pleasure that the residue of your train should remain one day sober, to admit Will Watkins to get drunk without terror of his life.’

‘Such occasion may arrive. Where dost thou serve, Watkins?’

‘In the stable, so please you.’

‘Let our chamberlain bring thee into the household, as a yeoman of the night-watch. I like thy favour, and it is something to have one sober fellow in the house, although he is only such through the fear of death. Attend, therefore, near our person, and thou shalt find sobriety a thriving virtue.’

Meantime a load of care and fear added to the distress of

Sir John Ramorny's sick-chamber. His reflections, disordered as they were by the opiate, fell into great confusion when the Prince, in whose presence he had suppressed its effect by strong resistance, had left the apartment. His consciousness, which he had possessed perfectly during the interview, began to be very much disturbed. He felt a general sense that he had incurred a great danger, that he had rendered the Prince his enemy, and that he had betrayed to him a secret which might affect his own life. In this state of mind and body, it was not strange that he should either dream, or else that his diseased organs should become subject to that species of phantasmagoria which is excited by the use of opium. He thought that the shade of Queen Annabella stood by his bedside, and demanded the youth whom she had placed under his charge, simple, virtuous, gay, and innocent.

'Thou hast rendered him reckless, dissolute, and vicious,' said the shade of pallid Majesty. 'Yet I thank thee, John of Ramorny, ungrateful to me, false to thy word, and treacherous to my hopes. Thy hate shall counteract the evil which thy friendship has done to him. And well do I hope that, now thou art no longer his counsellor, a bitter penance on earth may purchase my ill-fated child pardon and acceptance in a better world.'

Ramorny stretched out his arms after his benefactress, and endeavoured to express contrition and excuse, but the countenance of the apparition became darker and sterner, till it was no longer that of the late Queen, but presented the gloomy and haughty aspect of the Black Douglas, then the timid and sorrowful face of King Robert, who seemed to mourn over the approaching dissolution of his royal house, and then a group of fantastic features, partly hideous, partly ludicrous, which moped, and chattered, and twisted themselves into unnatural and extravagant forms, as if ridiculing his endeavour to obtain an exact idea of their lineaments.

CHAPTER XVIII

A purple land, where law secures not life.

BYRON

THE morning of Ash Wednesday arose pale and bleak, as usual at this season in Scotland, where the worst and most inclement weather often occurs in the early spring months. It was a severe day of frost, and the citizens had to sleep away the consequences of the preceding holiday's debauchery. The sun had therefore risen for an hour above the horizon before there was any general appearance of life among the inhabitants of Perth, so that it was some time after daybreak when a citizen, going early to mass, saw the body of the luckless Oliver Proudfoot lying on its face across the kennel in the manner in which he had fallen under the blow, as our readers will easily imagine, of Antony Bonthron, the 'boy of the belt' — that is, the executioner of the pleasure — of John of Ramorny.

This early citizen was Allan Griffin, so termed because he was master of the Griffin Inn, and the alarm which he raised soon brought together, first straggling neighbours, and by and by a concourse of citizens. At first, from the circumstance of the well-known buff-coat and the crimson feather in the head-piece, the noise arose that it was the stout smith that lay there slain. This false rumour continued for some time, for the host of the Griffin, who himself had been a magistrate, would not permit the body to be touched or stirred till Bailie Craigdallie arrived, so that the face was not seen.

'This concerns the Fair City, my friends,' he said, 'and if it is the stout smith of the Wynd who lies here, the man lives not in Perth who will not risk land and life to avenge him. Look you, the villains have struck him down behind his back, for there is not a man within ten Scotch miles of Perth, gentle or simple, Highland or Lowland, that would have met him face to face with such evil purpose. Oh, brave men of Perth! the

flower of your manhood has been cut down, and that by a base and treacherous hand !'

A wild cry of fury arose from the people, who were fast assembling

'We will take him on our shoulders,' said a strong butcher — 'we will carry him to the King's presence at the Dominican convent'

'Ay — ay,' answered a blacksmith, 'neither bolt nor bar shall keep us from the King, neither monk nor mass shall break our purpose. A better armourer never laid hammer on anvil !'

'To the Dominicans ! — to the Dominicans !' shouted the assembled people

'Bethink you, burghers,' said another citizen, 'our king is a good king, and loves us like his children. It is the Douglas and the Duke of Albany that will not let good King Robert hear the distresses of his people'

'Are we to be slain in our own streets for the King's softness of heart?' said the butcher. 'The Bruce did otherwise. If the King will not keep us, we will keep ourselves. Ring the bells backward, every bell of them that is made of metal. Cry, and spare not, St Johnston's hunt is up !'¹

'Ay,' cried another citizen, 'and let us to the holds of Albany and the Douglas, and burn them to the ground. Let the fires tell far and near that Perth knew how to avenge her stout Henry Gow. He has fought a score of times for the Fair City's right, let us show we can fight once to avenge his wrong. Hallo ! ho ! brave citizens, St. Johnston's hunt is up !'

This cry, the well-known rallying word amongst the inhabitants of Perth, and seldom heard but on occasions of general uproar, was echoed from voice to voice, and one or two neighbouring steeples, of which the enraged citizens possessed themselves, either by consent of the priests or in spite of their opposition, began to ring out the ominous alarm notes, in which, as the ordinary succession of the chimes was reversed, the bells were said to be rung backward.

Still, as the crowd thickened, and the roar waxed more universal and louder, Allan Griffin, a burly man with a deep voice, and well respected among high and low, kept his station as he bestrode the corpse, and called loudly to the multitude to keep back and wait the arrival of the magistrates.

'We must proceed by order in this matter, my masters. we

¹ See Note 38

must have our magistrates at our head. 'They are duly chosen and elected in our town-hall, good men and true every one, we will not be called rioters, or idle perturbators of the king's peace. Stand you still, and make room, for yonder comes Bailie Craigdallie, ay, and honest Simon Glover, to whom the Fair City is so much bounden. Alas—alas! my kind townsmen, his beautiful daughter was a bride yesternight, this morning the Fair Maid of Perth is a widow before she has been a wife.'

This new theme of sympathy increased the rage and sorrow of the crowd the more, as many women now mingled with them, who echoed back the alarm cry to the men

'Ay—ay, St. Johnston's hunt is up! For the Fair Maid of Perth and the brave Henry Gow! Up—up, every one of you, spare not for your skin cutting! To the stables!—to the stables! When the horse is gone the man-at-arms is useless, cut off the grooms and yeomen, lame, maim, and stab the horses, kill the base squires and pages. Let these proud knights meet us on their feet if they dare!'

'They dare not—they dare not,' answered the men, 'their strength is in their horses and armour, and yet the haughty and ungrateful villains have slain a man whose skill as an armourer was never matched in Milan or Venice. To arms!—to arms, brave burghers! St. Johnston's hunt is up!'

Amid this clamour, the magistrates and superior class of inhabitants with difficulty obtained room to examine the body, having with them the town clerk to take an official protocol, or, as it is still called, a precognition, of the condition in which it was found. To these delays the multitude submitted, with a patience and order which strongly marked the national character of a people whose resentment has always been the more deeply dangerous, that they will, without relaxing their determination of vengeance, submit with patience to all delays which are necessary to ensure its attainment. The multitude, therefore, received their magistrates with a loud cry, in which the thirst of revenge was announced, together with the deferential welcome to the patrons by whose direction they expected to obtain it in right and legal fashion.

While these accents of welcome still rung above the crowd, who now filled the whole adjacent streets, receiving and circulating a thousand varying reports, the fathers of the city caused the body to be raised and more closely examined, when it was instantly perceived, and the truth publicly announced, that

not the armourer of the Wynd, so highly and, according to the esteemed qualities of the time, so justly popular among his fellow-citizens, but a man of far less general estimation, though not without his own value in society, lay murdered before them — the brisk bonnet-maker, Oliver Proudpute. The resentment of the people had so much turned upon the general opinion that their frank and brave champion, Henry Gow, was the slaughtered person, that the contradiction of the report served to cool the general fury, although, if poor Oliver had been recognised at first, there is little doubt that the cry of vengeance would have been as unanimous, though not probably so furious, as in the case of Henry Wynd¹. The first circulation of the unexpected intelligence even excited a smile among the crowd, so near are the confines of the ludicrous to those of the terrible.

‘The murderers have without doubt taken him for Henry Smith,’ said Griffin, ‘which must have been a great comfort to him in the circumstances.’

But the arrival of other persons on the scene soon restored its deeply tragic character.

¹ See Note 37

CHAPTER XIX

Who's that that rings the bell ? Diablos, ho !
The town will rise

Othello, Act II Scene III

THE wild rumours which flew through the town, speedily followed by the tolling of the alarm bells, spread general consternation. The nobles and knights, with their followers, gathered in different places of rendezvous, where a defence could best be maintained, and the alarm reached the royal residence, where the young prince was one of the first to appear, to assist, if necessary, in the defence of the old king. The scene of the preceding night ran in his recollection, and, remembering the blood-stained figure of Bonthron, he conceived, though indistinctly, that the ruffian's action had been connected with this uproar. The subsequent and more interesting discourse with Sir John Ramorny had, however, been of such an impressive nature as to obliterate all traces of what he had vaguely heard of the bloody act of the assassin, excepting a confused recollection that some one or other had been slain. It was chiefly on his father's account that he had assumed arms with his household train, who, clad in bright armour, and bearing lances in their hands, made now a figure very different from that of the preceding night, when they appeared as intoxicated Bacchanalians. The kind old monarch received this mark of filial attachment with tears of gratitude, and proudly presented his son to his brother Albany, who entered shortly afterwards. He took them each by the hand.

'Now are we three Stuarts,' he said, 'as inseparable as the holy trefoil, and, as they say the wearer of that sacred herb mocks at magical delusion, so we, while we are true to each other, may set malice and enmity at defiance.'

The brother and son kissed the kind hand which pressed theirs, while Robert III. expressed his confidence in their affec-

tion The kiss of the youth was, for the time, sincere, that of the brother was the salute of the apostate Judas

In the meantime the bell of St John's church alarmed, amongst others, the inhabitants of Curfew Street. In the house of Simon Glover, old Dorothy Glover, as she was called (for she also took name from the trade she practised, under her master's auspices), was the first to catch the sound. Though somewhat deaf upon ordinary occasions, her ear for bad news was as sharp as a kite's scent for carrion, for Dorothy, otherwise an industrious, faithful, and even affectionate creature, had that strong appetite for collecting and retailing sinister intelligence which is often to be marked in the lower classes. Little accustomed to be listened to, they love the attention which a tragic tale ensures to the bearer, and enjoy, perhaps, the temporary equality to which misfortune reduces those who are ordinarily accounted their superiors. Dorothy had no sooner possessed herself of a slight packet of the rumours which were flying abroad than she bounced into her master's bedroom, who had taken the privilege of age and the holytide to sleep longer than usual.

'There he lies, honest man!' said Dorothy, half in a screeching and half in a wailing tone of sympathy — 'there he lies, his best friend slain, and he knowing as little about it as the babe new born, that kens not life from death'

'How now!' said the glover, starting up out of his bed. 'What is the matter, old woman? is my daughter well?'

'Old woman!' said Dorothy, who, having her fish hooked, chose to let him play a little. 'I am not so old,' said she, flouncing out of the room, 'as to bide in the place till a man rises from his naked bed —'

And presently she was heard at a distance in the parlour beneath, melodiously singing to the scrubbing of her own broom.

'Dorothy — screech-owl — devil — say but my daughter is well!'

'I *am* well, my father,' answered the Fair Maid of Perth, speaking from her bedroom — 'perfectly well, but what, for Our Lady's sake, is the matter? The bells ring backward, and there is shrieking and crying in the streets'

'I will presently know the cause. Here, Conachar, come speedily and tie my points. I forgot — the Highland loon is far beyond Fortingall. Patience, daughter, I will presently bring you news'

'Ye need not hurry yourself for that, Simon Glover,' quoth the obdurate old woman, 'the best and the worst of it may be tauld before you could hobble over your door-stane. I ken the hail story abroad, "for," thought I, "our goodman is so wilful, that he'll be for banging out to the tui'zie, be the cause what it like, and sae I maun e'en stir my shanks, and learn the cause of all this, or he will hae his auld nose in the midst of it, and maybe get it nupt off before he knows what for"'

'And what is the news, then, old woman?' said the impatient glover, still busying himself with the hundred points or latchets which were the means of attaching the doublet to the hose.

Dorothy suffered him to proceed in his task till she conjectured it must be nearly accomplished, and foresaw that, if she told not the secret herself, her master would be abroad to seek in person for the cause of the disturbance. She, therefore, halloo'd out, 'Aweel—aweel, ye canna say it is my fault, if you hear ill news before you have been at the morning mass. I would have kept it from ye till ye had heard the priest's word, but since you must hear it, you have e'en lost the truest friend that ever gave hand to another, and Perth maun mourn for the bravest burgher that ever took a blade in hand!'

'Harry Smith! Harry Smith!' exclaimed the father and the daughter at once.

'Oh, ay, there ye hae it at last,' said Dorothy, 'and whase fault was it but your ain? ye made such a piece of work about his companying with a glee-woman, as if he had companied with a Jewess!'

Dorothy would have gone on long enough, but her master exclaimed to his daughter, who was still in her own apartment, 'It is nonsense, Catharine—all the dotage of an old fool. No such thing has happened. I will bring you the true tidings in a moment', and snatching up his staff, the old man hurried out past Dorothy, and into the street, where the throng of people were rushing towards the High Street. Dorothy, in the meantime, kept muttering to herself, 'Thy father is a wise man, take his ain word for it. He will come next by some scathe in the hobbleshaw, and then it will be, "Dorothy, get the lint," and "Dorothy, spread the plaster"', but now it is nothing but nonsense, and a lie, and impossibility, that can come out of Dorothy's mouth. Impossible! Does auld Simon think that Harry Smith's head was as hard as his stithy, and a hail clan of Highlandmen dinging at him?'

Here she was interrupted by a figure like an angel, who came wandering by her with wild eye, cheek deadly pale, hair dishevelled, and an apparent want of consciousness, which terrified the old woman out of her discontented humour.

'Our Lady bless my bairn!' said she 'What look you sae wild for?'

'Did you not say some one was dead?' said Catharine, with a frightful uncertainty of utterance, as if her organs of speech and hearing served her but imperfectly.

'Dead, hinny! Ay — ay, dead eneugh, ye'll no hae him to gloom at ony mair'

'Dead!' repeated Catharine, still with the same uncertainty of voice and manner 'Dead — slain — and by Highlanders?'

'I'se warrant by Highlanders, the lawless loons Wha is it else that kills maist of the folks about, unless now and than when the burghers take a turrivie, and kill ane another, or whiles that the knights and nobles shed blood? But I'se up-hauld it's been the Highlandmen this bout The man was no in Perth, laird or loon, durst have faced Henry Smith man to man There's been sair odds against him, ye'll see that when it's looked into'

'Highlanders!' repeated Catharine, as if haunted by some idea which troubled her senses. 'Highlanders' Oh, Conachar — Conachar!'

'Indeed, and I daresay you have lighted on the very man, Catharine They quarrelled, as you saw, on the St. Valentine's Even, and had a warstle A Highlandman has a long memory for the like of that Gie him a cuff at Martinmas, and his cheek will be tingling at Whitsunday But what could have brought down the lang-legged loons to do their bloody wark within burgh?'

'Woe's me, it was I,' said Catharine — 'it was I brought the Highlanders down — I that sent for Conachar — ay, they have lain in wait — but it was I that brought them within reach of their prey But I will see with my own eyes — and then — something we will do Say to my father I will be back anon'

'Are ye distraught, lassie?' shouted Dorothy, as Catharine made past her towards the street door 'You would not gang into the street with the hair hanging down your haffets in that guise, and you kenn'd for the Fair Maid of Perth? Mass, but she's out in the street, come o't what like, and the auld Glover will be as mad as if I could withhold her, will she nill she, flyte she fling she This is a brave morning for an Ash Wednesday!'

What's to be done? If I were to seek my master among the multitude, I were like to be crushed beneath their feet, and little moan made for the old woman. And am I to run after Catharine, who ere this is out of sight, and far lighter of foot than I am? so I will just down the gate to Nicol Barber's, and tell him a' about it.'

While the trusty Dorothy was putting her prudent resolve into execution, Catharine ran through the streets of Perth in a manner which at another moment would have brought on her the attention of every one who saw her hurrying on with a reckless impetuosity, wildly and widely different from the ordinary decency and composure of her step and manner, and without the plaid, scarf, or mantle which 'women of good,' of fair character and decent rank, universally carried around them, when they went abroad. But, distracted as the people were, every one inquiring or telling the cause of the tumult, and most recounting it different ways, the negligence of her dress and discomposure of her manner made no impression on any one, and she was suffered to press forward on the path she had chosen without attracting more notice than the other females who, starved by anxious curiosity or fear, had come out to inquire the cause of an alarm so general—it might be to seek for friends for whose safety they were interested.

As Catharine passed along, she felt all the wild influence of the agitating scene, and it was with difficulty she forbore from repeating the cries of lamentation and alarm which were echoed around her. In the meantime, she rushed rapidly on, embarrassed like one in a dream, with a strange sense of dreadful calamity, the precise nature of which she was unable to define, but which implied the terrible consciousness that the man who loved her so fondly, whose good qualities she so highly esteemed, and whom she now felt to be dearer than perhaps she would before have acknowledged to her own bosom, was murdered, and most probably by her means. The connexion betwixt Henry's supposed death and the descent of Conachar and his followers, though adopted by her in a moment of extreme and engrossing emotion, was sufficiently probable to have been received for truth, even if her understanding had been at leisure to examine its credibility. Without knowing what she sought, except the general desire to know the worst of the dreadful report, she hurried forward to the very spot which of all others her feelings of the preceding day would have induced her to avoid.

Who would, upon the evening of Shrove-tide, have persuaded the proud, the timid, the shy, the rigidly decorous Catharine Glover that before mass on Ash Wednesday she should rush through the streets of Perth, making her way amidst tumult and confusion, with her hair unbound and her dress disarranged, to seek the house of that same lover who, she had reason to believe, had so grossly and indelicately neglected and affronted her as to pursue a low and licentious amour? Yet so it was, and her eagerness taking, as if by instinct, the road which was most free, she avoided the High Street, where the pressure was greatest, and reached the wynd by the narrow lanes on the northern skirt of the town, through which Henry Smith had formerly escorted Louise. But even these comparatively lonely passages were now astir with passengers, so general was the alarm. Catharine Glover made her way through them, however, while such as observed her looked on each other and shook their heads in sympathy with her distress. At length, without any distinct idea of her own purpose, she stood before her lover's door and knocked for admittance.

The silence which succeeded the echoing of her hasty summons increased the alarm which had induced her to take this desperate measure.

'Open—open, Henry!' she cried. 'Open, if you yet live! Open, if you would not find Catharine Glover dead upon your threshold!'

As she cried thus frantically to ears which she was taught to believe were stopped by death, the lover she invoked opened the door in person, just in time to prevent her sinking on the ground. The extremity of his ecstatic joy upon an occasion so unexpected was qualified only by the wonder which forbade him to believe it real, and by his alarm at the closed eyes, half-opened and blanched lips, total absence of complexion, and apparently total cessation of breathing.

Henry had remained at home, in spite of the general alarm, which had reached his ears for a considerable time, fully determined to put himself in the way of no brawls that he could avoid, and it was only in compliance with a summons from the magistrates, which, as a burgher, he was bound to obey, that, taking his sword and a spare buckler from the wall, he was about to go forth, for the first time unwillingly, to pay his service, as his tenure bound him.

'It is hard,' he said, 'to be put forward in all the town feuds, when the fighting work is so detestable to Catharine. I

am sure there are enough of wenches in Perth that say to their gallants, "Go out, do your devoir bravely, and win your lady's grace", and yet they send not for their lovers, but for me, who cannot do the duties of a man to protect a minstrel woman, or of a burgess who fights for the honour of his town, but this peevish Catharine uses me as if I were a brawler and bordeller!

Such were the thoughts which occupied his mind, when, as he opened his door to issue forth, the person dearest to his thoughts, but whom he certainly least expected to see, was present to his eyes, and dropped into his arms

His mixture of surprise, joy, and anxiety did not deprive him of the presence of mind which the occasion demanded. To place Catharine Glover in safety, and recall her to herself, was to be thought of before rendering obedience to the summons of the magistrates, however pressingly that had been delivered. He carried his lovely burden, as light as a feather, yet more precious than the same quantity of purest gold, into a small bedchamber which had been his mother's. It was the most fit for an invalid, as it looked into the garden, and was separated from the noise of the tumult.

'Here, Nurse — Nurse Shoolbred — come quick — come for death and life — here is one wants thy help!'

Up trotted the old dame 'If it should but prove any one that will keep thee out of the scuffle,' for she also had been aroused by the noise, but what was her astonishment when, placed in love and reverence on the bed of her late mistress, and supported by the athletic arms of her foster son, she saw the apparently lifeless form of the Fair Maid of Perth. 'Catharine Glover!' she said, 'and, Holy Mother, a dying woman, as it would seem!'

'Not so, old woman,' said her foster son 'the dear heart throbs — the sweet breath comes and returns! Come thou, that may aid her more meetly than I — bring water — essences — whatever thy old skill can devise Heaven did not place her in my arms to die, but to live for herself and me!'

With an activity which her age little promised, Nurse Shoolbred collected the means of restoring animation, for, like many women of the period, she understood what was to be done in such cases, nay, possessed a knowledge of treating wounds of an ordinary description, which the warlike propensities of her foster son kept in pretty constant exercise.

'Come now,' she said, 'son Henry, unfold your arms from

about my patient, though she is worth the pressing, and set thy hands at freedom to help me with what I want. Nay, I will not insist on your quitting her hand, if you will beat the palm gently, as the fingers uncloseth their clenched grasp'

'I beat her slight, beautiful hand!' said Henry, 'you were as well bid me beat a glass cup with a forehammer as tap her fair palm with my horn-hard fingers. But the fingers do unfold, and we will find a better way than beating', and he applied his lips to the pretty hand, whose motion indicated returning sensation. One or two deep sighs succeeded, and the Fair Maid of Perth opened her eyes, fixed them on her lover, as he kneeled by the bedside, and again sunk back on the pillow. As she withdrew not her hand from her lover's hold or from his grasp, we must in charity believe that the return to consciousness was not so complete as to make her aware that he abused the advantage, by pressing it alternately to his lips and his bosom. At the same time we are compelled to own that the blood was colouring in her cheek, and that her breathing was deep and regular, for a minute or two during this relapse.

The noise at the door began now to grow much louder, and Henry was called for by all his various names of Smith, Gow, and Hal of the Wynd, as heathens used to summon their deities by different epithets. At last, like Portuguese Catholics when exhausted with entreating their saints, the crowd without had recourse to vituperative exclamations.

'Out upon you, Henry! You are a disgraced man, man-sworn to your burgher-oath, and a traitor to the Fair City, unless you come instantly forth!'

It would seem that Nurse Shoolbred's applications were now so far successful that Catharine's senses were in some measure restored, for, turning her face more towards that of her lover than her former posture permitted, she let her right hand fall on his shoulder, leaving her left still in his possession, and seeming slightly to detain him, while she whispered, 'Do not go, Henry — stay with me, they will kill thee, these men of blood.'

It would seem that this gentle invocation, the result of finding the lover alive whom she expected to have only recognised as a corpse, though it was spoken so low as scarcely to be intelligible, had more effect to keep Henry Wynd in his present posture than the repeated summons of many voices from without had to bring him downstairs.

'Mass, townsmen,' cried one hardy citizen to his companions, 'the saucy smith but jests with us! Let us into the house, and bring him out by the lug and the horn.'

'Take care what you are doing,' said a more cautious assailant. 'The man that presses on Henry Gow's retirement may go into his house with sound bones, but will return with ready-made work for the surgeon. But here comes one has good right to do our errand to him, and make the recreant hear reason on both sides of his head.'

The person of whom this was spoken was no other than Simon Glover himself. He had arrived at the fatal spot where the unlucky bonnet-maker's body was lying just in time to discover, to his great relief, that, when it was turned with the face upwards by Bailie Craigdallie's orders, the features of the poor braggart Proudfoot were recognised, when the crowd expected to behold those of their favourite champion, Henry Smith. A laugh, or something approaching to one, went among those who remembered how hard Oliver had struggled to obtain the character of a fighting man, however foreign to his nature and disposition, and remarked now that he had met with a mode of death much better suited to his pretensions than to his temper. But this tendency to ill-timed mirth, which savoured of the rudeness of the times, was at once hushed by the voice, and cries, and exclamations of a woman, who struggled through the crowd, screaming at the same time, 'Oh, my husband—my husband!'

Room was made for the sorrower, who was followed by two or three female friends. Maudie Proudfoot had been hitherto only noticed as a good-looking, black-haired woman, believed to be 'dink' and disdainful to those whom she thought meaner or poorer than herself, and lady and empress over her late husband, whom she quickly caused to lower his crest when she chanced to hear him crowing out of season. But now, under the influence of powerful passion, she assumed a far more imposing character.

'Do you laugh,' she said, 'you unworthy burghers of Perth, because one of your own citizens has poured his blood into the kennel? or do you laugh because the deadly lot has lighted on my husband? How has he deserved this? Did he not maintain an honest house by his own industry, and keep a creditable board, where the sick had welcome and the poor had relief? Did he not lend to those who wanted, stand by his neighbours as a friend, keep counsel and do justice like a magistrate?'

'It is true — it is true,' answered the assembly, 'his blood is our blood, as much as if it were Henry Gow's'

'You speak truth, neighbours,' said Bailie Craigdallie, 'and this feud cannot be patched up as the former was. citizen's blood must not flow unavenged down our kennels, as if it were ditch-water, or we shall soon see the broad Tay crimsoned with it. But this blow was never meant for the poor man on whom it has unhappily fallen. Every one knew what Oliver Proudfoot was, how wide he would speak, and how little he would do. He has Henry Smith's buff-coat, target, and head-piece. All the town know them as well as I do: there is no doubt on't. He had the trick, as you know, of trying to imitate the smith in most things. Some one, blind with rage, or perhaps through liquor, has stricken the innocent bonnet-maker, whom no man either hated or feared, or indeed cared either much or little about, instead of the stout smith, who has twenty feuds upon his hands.'

'What, then, is to be done, bailie?' cried the multitude.

'That, my friends, your magistrates will determine for you, as we shall instantly meet together when Sir Patrick Charteris cometh here, which must be anon. Meanwhile, let the surgeon Dwining examine that poor piece of clay, that he may tell us how he came by his fatal death, and then let the corpse be decently swathed in a clean shroud, as becomes an honest citizen, and placed before the high altar in the church of St John, the patron of the Fair City. Cease all clamour and noise, and every defensible man of you, as you would wish well to the Fair Town, keep his weapons in readiness, and be prepared to assemble on the High Street at the tolling of the common bell from the town-house, and we will either revenge the death of our fellow-citizen, or else we shall take such fortune as Heaven will send us. Meanwhile avoid all quarrelling with the knights and their followers till we know the innocent from the guilty. But wherefore tarries this knave Smith? He is ready enough in tumults when his presence is not wanted, and lags he now when his presence may serve the Fair City? What ails him, doth any one know? Hath he been upon the frolic last Fastern's Even?'

'Rather he is sick or sullen, Master Bailie,' said one of the city's mairs, or sergeants, 'for though he is within door, as his knaves report, yet he will neither answer to us nor admit us.'

'So please your worship, Master Bailie,' said Simon Glover,

'I will go myself to fetch Henry Smith. I have some little difference to make up with him. And blessed be Our Lady, who hath so ordered it that I find him alive, as a quarter of an hour since I could never have expected!'

'Bring the stout smith to the council-house,' said the baillie, as a mounted yeoman pressed through the crowd and whispered in his ear, 'Here is a good fellow who says the Knight of Kinfauns is entering the port.'

Such was the occasion of Simon Glover presenting himself at the house of Henry Gow at the period already noticed.

Unrestrained by the considerations of doubt and hesitation which influenced others, he repaired to the parlour, and having overheard the bustling of Dame Shoolbred, he took the privilege of intimacy to ascend to the bedroom, and, with the slight apology of—'I crave your pardon, good neighbour,' he opened the door and entered the apartment, where a singular and unexpected sight awaited him. At the sound of his voice, May Catharine experienced a revival much speedier than Dame Shoolbred's restoratives had been able to produce, and the paleness of her complexion changed into a deep glow of the most lovely red. She pushed her lover from her with both her hands, which, until this minute, her want of consciousness, or her affection, awakened by the events of the morning, had wellnigh abandoned to his caresses. Henry Smith, bashful as we know him, stumbled as he rose up, and none of the party were without a share of confusion, excepting Dame Shoolbred, who was glad to make some pretext to turn her back to the others, in order that she might enjoy a laugh at their expense, which she felt herself utterly unable to restrain, and in which the glover, whose surprise, though great, was of short duration, and of a joyful character, sincerely joined.

'Now, by good St. John,' he said, 'I thought I had seen a sight this morning that would cure me of laughter, at least till Lent was over, but this would make me curl my cheek if I were dying. Why, here stands honest Henry Smith, who was lamented as dead, and toll'd out for from every steeple in town, alive, merry, and, as it seems from his ruddy complexion, as like to live as any man in Perth. And here is my precious daughter, that yesterday would speak of nothing but the wickedness of the wights that haunt profane sports and protect glee-maidens. Ay, she who set St. Valentine and St. Cupid both at defiance—here she is, turned a glee-maiden herself, for what I can see! Truly, I am glad to see that you, my good Dame

Shoolbred, who give way to no disorder, have been of this loving party'

'You do me wrong, my dearest father,' said Catharine, as if about to weep 'I came here with far different expectations than you suppose I only came because — because ——'

'Because you expected to find a dead lover,' said her father, 'and you have found a living one, who can receive the tokens of your regard, and return them Now, were it not a sin, I could find in my heart to thank Heaven that thou hast been surprised at last into owning thyself a woman Simon Glover is not worthy to have an absolute saint for his daughter. Nay, look not so piteously, nor expect condolence from me' Only I will try not to look merry, if you will be pleased to stop your tears, or confess them to be tears of joy'

'If I were to die for such a confession,' said poor Catharine, 'I could not tell what to call them Only believe, dear father, and let Henry believe, that I would never have come hither, unless — unless ——'

'Unless you had thought that Henry could not come to you,' said her father 'And now, shake hands in peace and concord, and agree as Valentines should Yesterday was Shrovetide, Henry We will hold that thou hast confessed thy follies, hast obtained absolution, and art relieved of all the guilt thou stoodest charged with'

'Nay, touching that, father Simon,' said the smith, 'now that you are cool enough to hear me, I can swear on the Gospels, and I can call my nurse, Dame Shoolbred, to witness——'

'Nay — nay,' said the glover, 'but wherefore rake up differences which should all be forgotten?'

'Hark ye, Simon! — Simon Glover!' This was now echoed from beneath.

'True, son Smith,' said the glover, seriously, 'we have other work in hand. You and I must to the council instantly Catharine shall remain here with Dame Shoolbred, who will take charge of her till we return, and then, as the town is in misrule, we two, Harry, will carry her home, and they will be bold men that cross us'

'Nay, my dear father,' said Catharine, with a smile, 'now you are taking Oliver Proudpute's office That doughty burgher is Henry's brother-at-arms'

Her father's countenance grew dark.

'You have spoke a stinging word, daughter; but you know

not what has happened. Kiss him, Catharine, in token of forgiveness'

'Not so,' said Catharine, 'I have done him too much grace already. When he has seen the errant damsel safe home, it will be time enough to claim his reward.'

'Meantime,' said Henry, 'I will claim, as your host, what you will not allow me on other terms.'

He folded the fair maiden in his arms, and was permitted to take the salute which she had refused to bestow.

As they descended the stair together, the old man laid his hand on the smith's shoulder, and said, 'Henry, my dearest wishes are fulfilled, but it is the pleasure of the saints that it should be in an hour of difficulty and terror.'

'True,' said the smith, 'but thou knowest, father, if our riots be frequent at Perth, at least they seldom last long.'

Then, opening a door which led from the house into the smithy, 'Here, comrades,' he cried, 'Anton, Cuthbert, Dingwell, and Ringan! Let none of you stir from the place till I return. Be as true as the weapons I have taught you to forge a French crown and a Scotch merry making for you, if you obey my command. I leave a mighty treasure in your charge. Watch the doors well, let little Jannekin scout up and down the wynd, and have your arms ready if any one approaches the house. Open the doors to no man till father Glover or I return, it concerns my life and happiness.'

The strong, swarthy giants to whom he spoke answered, 'Death to him who attempts it!'

'My Catharine is now as safe,' said he to her father, 'as if twenty men garrisoned a royal castle in her cause. We shall pass most quietly to the council house by walking through the garden.'

He led the way through a little orchard accordingly, where the birds, which had been sheltered and fed during the winter by the good-natured artisan, early in the season as it was, were saluting the precarious smiles of a February sun with a few faint and interrupted attempts at melody.

'Hear these minstrels, father,' said the smith, 'I laughed at them this morning in the bitterness of my heart, because the little wretches sung, with so much of winter before them. But now, methinks, I could bear a blythe chorus, for I have my Valentine as they have theirs, and whatever ill may lie before me for to morrow, I am to day the happiest man in Perth, city or county, burgh or landward.'

'Yet I must allay your joy,' said the old glover, 'though, Heaven knows, I share it. Poor Oliver Proudfoot, the inoffensive fool that you and I knew so well, has been found this morning dead in the streets.'

'Only dead drunk, I trust?' said the smith, 'nay, a caudle and a dose of matrimonial advice will bring him to life again.'

'No, Henry — no. He is slain — slain with a battle-axe or some such weapon.'

'Impossible!' replied the smith, 'he was light-footed enough, and would not for all Perth have trusted to his hands, when he could extricate himself by his heels.'

'No choice was allowed him. The blow was dealt in the very back of his head; he who struck must have been a shorter man than himself, and used a horseman's battle-axe, or some such weapon, for a Lochaber-axe must have struck the upper part of his head. But there he lies dead, brained, I may say, by a most frightful wound.'

'This is inconceivable,' said Henry Wynd. 'He was in my house at midnight, in a morricker's habit, seemed to have been drinking, though not to excess. He told me a tale of having been beset by revellers, and being in danger, but, alas! you know the man — I deemed it was a swaggering fit, as he sometimes took when he was in liquor, and, may the Merciful Virgin forgive me! I let him go without company, in which I did him inhuman wrong. Holy St John be my witness! I would have gone with any helpless creature, and far more with him, with whom I have so often sat at the same board and drunken of the same cup. Who, of the race of man, could have thought of harming a creature so simple and so unoffending, excepting by his idle vaunts?'

'Henry, he wore thy head-piece, thy buff-coat, thy target. How came he by these?'

'Why, he demanded the use of them for the night, and I was ill at ease, and well pleased to be rid of his company, having kept no holiday, and being determined to keep none, in respect of our misunderstanding.'

'It is the opinion of Bailie Craigdallie and all our sagest counsellors that the blow was intended for yourself, and that it becomes you to prosecute the due vengeance of our fellow-citizen, who received the death which was meant for you.'

The smith was for some time silent. They had now left the garden, and were walking in a lonely lane, by which they

meant to approach the council house of the burgh without being exposed to observation or idle inquiry

'You are silent, my son, yet we two have much to speak of,' said Simon Glover. 'Bethink thee that this widowed woman, Maudlin, if she should see cause to bring a charge against any one for the wrong done to her and her orphan children, must support it by a champion, according to law and custom, for, be the murderer who he may, we know enough of these followers of the nobles to be assured that the party suspected will appeal to the combat, in derision, perhaps, of those whom they will call the cowardly burghers. While we are men with blood in our veins, this must not be, Henry Wynd.'

'I see where you would draw me, father,' answered Henry, dejectedly, 'and St. John knows I have heard a summons to battle as willingly as war-horse ever heard the trumpet. But bethink you, father, how I have lost Catharine's favour repeatedly, and have been driven wellnigh to despair of ever regaining it, for being, if I may say so, even too ready a man of my hands. And here are all our quarrels made up, and the hopes that seemed this morning removed beyond earthly prospect have become nearer and brighter than ever, and must I, with the dear one's kiss of forgiveness on my lips, engage in a new scene of violence, which you are well aware will give her the deepest offence?'

'It is hard for me to advise you, Henry,' said Simon, 'but this I must ask you—Have you, or have you not, reason to think that this poor unfortunate Oliver has been mistaken for you?'

'I fear it too much,' said Henry. 'He was thought something like me, and the poor fool had studied to ape my gestures and manner of walking, nay, the very airs which I have the trick of whistling, that he might increase a resemblance which has cost him dear. I have ill-willers enough, both in burgh and landward, to owe me a shrewd turn, and he, I think, could have none such.'

'Well, Henry, I cannot say but my daughter will be offended. She has been much with Father Clement, and has received notions about peace and forgiveness which methinks suit ill with a country where the laws cannot protect us, unless we have spirit to protect ourselves. If you determine for the combat, I will do my best to persuade her to look on the matter as the other good womanhood in the burgh will do, and if you resolve to let the matter rest—the man who has lost his life for yours remaining unavenged, the widow and the orphans without any

reparation for the loss of a husband and father — I will then do you the justice to remember that I, at least, ought not to think the worse of you for your patience, since it was adopted for love of my child. But, Henry, we must in that case remove ourselves from bonny St Johnston, for here we will be but a disgraced family.'

Henry groaned deeply, and was silent for an instant, then replied, 'I would rather be dead than dishonoured, though I should never see her again.' Had it been yester evening, I would have met the best blade among these men-at-arms as blythely as ever I danced at a maypole. But to-day, when she had first as good as said, "Henry Smith, I love thee!" Father Glover, it is very hard. Yet it is all my own fault. This poor unhappy Oliver! I ought to have allowed him the shelter of my roof, when he prayed me in his agony of fear, or, had I gone with him, I should then have prevented or shared his fate. But I taunted him, ridiculed him, loaded him with maledictions, though the saints know they were uttered in idle peevishness of impatience. I drove him out from my doors, whom I knew so helpless, to take the fate which was perhaps intended for me. I must avenge him, or be dishonoured for ever. See, father, I have been called a man hard as the steel I work in. Does burnished steel ever drop tears like these? Shame on me that I should shed them!'

'It is no shame, my dearest son,' said Simon, 'thou art as kind as brave, and I have always known it. There is yet a chance for us. No one may be discovered to whom suspicion attaches, and where none such is found, the combat cannot take place. It is a hard thing to wish that the innocent blood may not be avenged. But if the perpetrator of this foul murder be hidden for the present, thou wilt be saved from the task of seeking that vengeance which Heaven, doubtless, will take at its own proper time.'

As they spoke thus, they arrived at the point of the High Street where the council-house was situated. As they reached the door, and made their way through the multitude who thronged the street, they found the avenues guarded by a select party of armed burghers, and about fifty spears belonging to the Knight of Kintlauns, who, with his allies the Grays, Blairs, Moncrieffs, and others, had brought to Perth a considerable body of horse, of which these were a part. So soon as the glover and smith presented themselves, they were admitted to the chamber in which the magistrates were assembled.

CHAPTER XX

A woman wails for justice at the gate,
A widow d woman, wan and desolate

Bertha

THE council-room of Perth¹ presented a singular spectacle. In a gloomy apartment, ill and inconveniently lighted by two windows of different form and of unequal size, were assembled, around a large oaken table, a group of men, of whom those who occupied the higher seats were merchants, that is, guild brethren, or shopkeepers, arrayed in decent dresses becoming their station, but most of them bearing, like the Regent York, 'signs of war around their aged necks'—gorgets, namely, and baldricks, which sustained their weapons. The lower places around the table were occupied by mechanics and artisans, the presidents, or deacons, as they were termed, of the working classes, in their ordinary clothes, somewhat better arranged than usual. These, too, wore pieces of armour of various descriptions. Some had the black-jack, or doublet, covered with small plates of iron of a lozenge shape, which, secured through the upper angle, hung in rows above each [other], and which, swaying with the motion of the wearer's person, formed a secure defence to the body. Others had buff coats, which, as already mentioned, could resist the blow of a sword, and even a lance's point, unless propelled with great force. At the bottom of the table, surrounded as it was with this varied assembly, sat Sir Louis Lundin, no military man, but a priest and parson of St. John's, arrayed in his canonical dress, and having his pen and ink before him. He was town clerk of the burgh, and, like all the priests of the period (who were called from that circumstance the Pope's knights), received the honourable title of *Dominus*, contracted into Dom, or Dan, or translated into Sir, the title of reverence due to the secular chivalry.

¹ See Note 38

On an elevated seat at the head of the council-board was placed Sir Patrick Charteris, in complete armour, brightly burnished—a singular contrast to the motley mixture of warlike and peaceful attire exhibited by the burghers, who were only called to arms occasionally. The bearing of the provost, while it completely admitted the intimate connexion which mutual interests had created betwixt himself, the burgh, and the magistracy, was at the same time calculated to assert the superiority which, in virtue of gentle blood and chivalrous rank, the opinions of the age assigned to him over the members of the assembly in which he presided. Two squires stood behind him, one of them holding the knight's pennon, and another his shield, bearing his armorial distinctions, being a hand holding a dagger, or short sword, with the proud motto, 'This is my charter'. A handsome page displayed the long sword of his master, and another bore his lance, all which chivalrous emblems and appurtenances were the more scrupulously exhibited, that the dignitary to whom they belonged was engaged in discharging the office of a burgh magistrate. In his own person the Knight of Kinfauns appeared to affect something of state and stiffness which did not naturally pertain to his frank and jovial character.

'So you are come at length, Henry Smith and Simon Glover,' said the provost. 'Know that you have kept us waiting for your attendance. Should it so chance again while we occupy this place, we will lay such a fine on you as you will have small pleasure in paying. Enough—make no excuses. They are not asked now, and another time they will not be admitted. Know, sirs, that our reverend clerk hath taken down in writing, and at full length, what I will tell you in brief, that you may see what is to be required of you, Henry Smith, in particular. Our late fellow-citizen, Oliver Proudfoot, hath been found dead in the High Street, close by the entrance into the wynd. It seemeth he was slain by a heavy blow with a short axe, dealt from behind and at unawares, and the act by which he fell can only be termed a deed of foul and forethought murder. So much for the crime. The criminal can only be indicated by circumstances. It is recorded in the protocol of the Reverend Sir Louis Lundin, that divers well-reputed witnesses saw our deceased citizen, Oliver Proudfoot, till a late period accompanying the entry of the morrice-dancers,¹ of whom he was one, as far as the house of Simon Glover, in Curfew Street, where

¹ See Note 39.

they again played their pageant. It is also manifested that at this place he separated from the rest of the band, after some discourse with Simon Glover, and made an appointment to meet with the others of his company at the sign of the Griffin, there to conclude the holiday. Now, Simon, I demand of you whether this be truly stated, so far as you know? and further, what was the purport of the defunct Oliver Proudfoote's discourse with you?

'My Lord Provost and very worshipful Sir Patrick,' answered Simon Glover, 'you and this honourable council shall know that, touching certain reports which had been made of the conduct of Henry Smith, some quarrel had arisen between myself and another of my family and the said Smith here present. Now, this our poor fellow citizen, Oliver Proudfoote, having been active in spreading these reports, as indeed his element lay in such gossiping, some words passed betwixt him and me on the subject, and, as I think, he left me with the purpose of visiting Henry Smith, for he broke off from the morrice-dancers, promising, as it seems, to meet them, as your honour has said, at the sign of the Griffin, in order to conclude the evening. But what he actually did, I know not, as I never again saw him in life.'

'It is enough,' said Sir Patrick, 'and agrees with all that we have heard. Now, worthy sirs, we next find our poor fellow citizen environed by a set of revellers and maskers who had assembled in the High Street, by whom he was shamefully ill treated, being compelled to kneel down in the street, and there to quaff huge quantities of liquor against his inclination until at length he escaped from them by flight. This violence was accomplished with drawn swords, loud shouts, and imprecations, so as to attract the attention of several persons, who, alarmed by the tumult, looked out from their windows, as well as of one or two passengers, who, keeping aloof from the light of the torches, lest they also had been maltreated, beheld the usage which our fellow citizen received in the High Street of the burgh. And although these revellers were disguised, and used vizards, yet their disguises were well known, being a set of quaint masking habits prepared some weeks ago by command of Sir John Ramorny, Master of the Horse to his Royal Highness the Duke of Rothsay, Prince Royal of Scotland.'

A low groan went through the assembly.

'Yes, so it is, brave burghers,' continued Sir Patrick. 'our inquiries have led us into conclusions both melancholy and

terrible But as no one can regret the point at which they seem likely to arrive more than I do, so no man living can dread its consequences less It is even so, various artisans employed upon the articles have described the dresses prepared for Sir John Ramorny's mask as being exactly similar to those of the men by whom Oliver Proudfoot was observed to be maltreated And one mechanic, being Wingfield the feather-dresser, who saw the revellers when they had our fellow-citizen within their hands, remarked that they wore the cinctures and coronals of painted feathers which he himself had made by the order of the Prince's master of the horse.

'After the moment of his escape from these revellers, we lose all trace of Oliver, but we can prove that the maskers went to Sir John Ramorny's, where they were admitted, after some show of delay It is rumoured that thou, Henry Smith, sawest our unhappy fellow-citizen after he had been in the hands of these revellers What is the truth of that matter?'

'He came to my house in the wynd,' said Henry, 'about half an hour before midnight, and I admitted him, something unwillingly, as he had been keeping carnival while I remained at home, and "There is ill talk," says the proverb, "betwixt a full man and a fasting".'

'And in which plight seemed he when thou didst admit him?' said the provost

'He seemed,' answered the smith, 'out of breath, and talked repeatedly of having been endangered by revellers I paid but small regard, for he was ever a timorous, chicken-spirited, though well-meaning, man, and I held that he was speaking more from fancy than reality But I shall always account it for foul offence in myself that I did not give him my company, which he requested, and if I live, I will found masses for his soul, in expiation of my guilt'

'Did he describe those from whom he received the injury?' said the provost.

'Revellers in masking habits,' replied Henry

'And did he intimate his fear of having to do with them on his return?' again demanded Sir Patrick

'He alluded particularly to his being waylaid, which I treated as visionary, having been able to see no one in the lane'

'Had he then no help from thee of any kind whatsoever?' said the provost.

'Yes, worshipful,' replied the smith, 'he exchanged his

morrice dress for my head-piece, buff coat, and target, which I hear were found upon his body, and I have at home his morrice cap and bells, with the jerkin and other things pertaining. He was to return my garb of fence, and get back his own masking suit this day, had the saints so permitted.'

'You saw him not then afterwards?'

'Never, my lord.'

'One word more,' said the provost. 'Have you any reason to think that the blow which slew Oliver Proudfeute was meant for another man?'

'I have,' answered the smith, 'but it is doubtful, and may be dangerous to add such a conjecture, which is besides only a supposition.'

'Speak it out, on your burgher faith and oath. For whom, think you, was the blow meant?'

'If I must speak,' replied Henry, 'I believe Oliver Proudfeute received the fate which was designed for myself, the rather that, in his folly, Oliver spoke of trying to assume my manner of walking, as well as my dress.'

'Have you feud with any one, that you form such an idea?' said Sir Patrick Charteris.

'To my shame and sin be it spoken, I have feud with Highland and Lowland, English and Scot, Perth and Angus. I do not believe poor Oliver had feud with a new-hatched chicken. Alas! he was the more fully prepared for a sudden call!'

'Hark ye, smith,' said the provost, 'answer me distinctly—Is there cause of feud between the household of Sir John Ramorny and yourself?'

'To a certainty, my lord, there is. It is now generally said that Black Quentin, who went over Tay to Fife some days since, was the owner of the hand which was found in Couvrefew Street upon the eve of St. Valentine. It was I who struck off that hand with a blow of my broadsword. As this Black Quentin was a chamberlain of Sir John, and much trusted, it is like there must be feud between me and his master's dependants.'

'It bears a likely front, smith,' said Sir Patrick Charteris. 'And now, good brothers and wise magistrates, there are two suppositions, each of which leads to the same conclusion. The maskers who seized our fellow citizen, and misused him in a manner of which his body retains some slight marks, may have met with their former prisoner as he returned homewards, and finished their ill-usage by taking his life. He himself expressed

to Henry Gow fears that this would be the case. If this be really true, one or more of Sir John Ramorny's attendants must have been the assassins. But I think it more likely that one or two of the revellers may have remained on the field, or returned to it, having changed perhaps their disguise, and that to those men (for Oliver Proudfoot, in his own personal appearance, would only have been a subject of sport) his apparition in the dress, and assuming, as he proposed to do, the manner, of Henry Smith, was matter of deep hatred, and that, seeing him alone, they had taken, as they thought, a certain and safe mode to rid themselves of an enemy so dangerous as all men know Henry Wynd is accounted by those that are his unfriends. The same train of reasoning, again, rests the guilt with the household of Sir John Ramorny. How think you, sirs? Are we not free to charge the crime upon them?'

The magistrates whispered together for several minutes, and then replied by the voice of Bailie Craigdallie — 'Noble knight, and our worthy provost, we agree entirely in what your wisdom has spoken concerning this dark and bloody matter; nor do we doubt your sagacity in tracing to the fellowship and the company of John Ramorny of that ilk the villainy which hath been done to our deceased fellow-citizen, whether in his own character and capacity or as mistaking him for our brave townsman, Henry of the Wynd. But Sir John, in his own behalf, and as the Prince's master of the horse, maintains an extensive household, and as, of course, the charge will be rebutted by a denial, we would ask, how we shall proceed in that case. It is true, could we find law for firing the lodging, and putting all within it to the sword, the old proverb of "Short rede, good rede," might here apply, for a fouler household of defiers of God, destroyers of men, and debauchers of women are nowhere sheltered than are in Ramorny's band. But I doubt that this summary mode of execution would scarce be borne out by the laws, and no tittle of evidence which I have heard will tend to fix the crime on any single individual or individuals'.

Before the provost could reply, the town-clerk arose, and, stroking his venerable beard, craved permission to speak, which was instantly granted. 'Brethren,' he said, 'as well in our fathers' time as ours, hath God, on being rightly appealed to, condescended to make manifest the crimes of the guilty and the innocence of those who may have been rashly accused. Let us demand from our sovereign lord, King Robert, who, when the wicked do not interfere to pervert his good intentions,

is as just and clement a prince as our annals can show in their long line, in the name of the Fair City, and of all the commons in Scotland, that he give us, after the fashion of our ancestors, the means of appealing to Heaven for light upon this dark murder. We will demand the proof by "bier-right," often granted in the days of our sovereign's ancestors, approved of by bulls and decretals, and administered by the great Emperor Charlemagne in France, by King Arthur in Britain, and by Gregory the Great, and the mighty Achaius, in this our land of Scotland.'

'I have heard of the bier-right, Sir Louis,' quoth the provost, 'and I know we have it in our charters of the Fair City, but I am something ill-learned in the ancient laws, and would pray you to inform us more distinctly of its nature.'

'We will demand of the King,' said Sir Louis Lundin, 'my advice being taken, that the body of our murdered fellow-citizen be transported into the High Church of St John,¹ and suitable masses said for the benefit of his soul and for the discovery of his foul murder. Meantime, we shall obtain an order that Sir John Ramorny give up a list of such of his household as were in Perth in the course of the night between Fastern's Even and this Ash Wednesday, and become bound to present them on a certain day and hour, to be early named, in the High Church of St. John, there one by one to pass before the bier of our murdered fellow citizen, and in the form prescribed to call upon God and His saints to bear witness that he is innocent of the acting, art or part, of the murder. And credit me, as has been indeed proved by numerous instances, that, if the murderer shall endeavour to shroud himself by making such an appeal, the antipathy which subsists between the dead body and the hand which dealt the fatal blow that divorced it from the soul will awaken some imperfect life, under the influence of which the veins of the dead man will pour forth at the fatal wounds the blood which has been so long stagnant in the veins. Or, to speak more certainly, it is the pleasure of Heaven, by some hidden agency which we cannot comprehend, to leave open this mode of discovering the wickedness of him who has defaced the image of his Creator.'

'I have heard this law talked of,' said Sir Patrick, 'and it was enforced in the Bruce's time. This surely is no unfit period to seek, by such a mystic mode of inquiry, the truth, to which no ordinary means can give us access, seeing that a

¹ See Note 40

general accusation of Sir John's household would full surely be met by a general denial. Yet I must crave farther of Sir Louis, our reverend town-clerk, how we shall prevent the guilty person from escaping in the interim ?'

'The burghers will maintain a strict watch upon the wall, drawbridges shall be raised and portcullises lowered, from sunset to sunrise, and strong patrols maintained through the night. This guard the burghers will willingly maintain, to secure against the escape of the murderer of their townsman.'

The rest of the counsellors acquiesced, by word, sign, and look, in this proposal.

'Again,' said the provost, 'what if any one of the suspected household refuse to submit to the ordeal of bier-right ?'

'He may appeal to that of combat,' said the reverend city scribe, 'with an opponent of equal rank, because the accused person must have his choice, in the appeal to the judgment of God, by what ordeal he will be tried. But if he refuses both, he must be held as guilty, and so punished.'

The sages of the council unanimously agreed with the opinion of their provost and town-clerk, and resolved, in all formality, to petition the King, as a matter of right, that the murder of their fellow-citizen should be inquired into according to this ancient form, which was held to manifest the truth, and received as matter of evidence in case of murder so late as towards the end of the 17th century. But before the meeting dissolved, Bailie Craigdallie thought it meet to inquire who was to be the champion of Maudie, or Magdalen, Proudpute and her two children.

'There need be little inquiry about that,' said Sir Patrick Charteris, 'we are men, and wear swords, which should be broken over the head of any one amongst us who will not draw it in behalf of the widow and orphans of our murdered fellow-citizen, and in brave revenge of his death. If Sir John Ramorny shall personally resent the inquiry, Patrick Charteris of Kinfauns will do battle with him to the outrance, whilst horse and man may stand, or spear and blade hold together. But in case the challenger be of yeomanly degree, well wot I that Magdalen Proudpute may choose her own champion among the bravest burghers of Perth, and shame and dishonour were it to the Fair City for ever could she light upon one who were traitor and coward enough to say her nay.' Bring her hither, that she may make her election.'

Henry Smith heard this with a melancholy anticipation that

the poor woman's choice would light upon him, and that his recent reconciliation with his mistress would be again dissolved, by his being engaged in a fresh quarrel, from which there lay no honourable means of escape, and which, in any other circumstances, he would have welcomed as a glorious opportunity of distinguishing himself, both in sight of the court and of the city. He was aware that, under the tuition of Father Clement, Catharine viewed the ordeal of battle rather as an insult to religion than an appeal to the Deity, and did not consider it as reasonable that superior strength of arm or skill of weapon should be resorted to as the proof of moral guilt or innocence. He had, therefore, much to fear from her peculiar opinions in this particular, refined as they were beyond those of the age she lived in.

While he thus suffered under these contending feelings, Magdalen, the widow of the slaughtered man, entered the court, wrapt in a deep mourning veil, and followed and supported by five or six women of good (that is, of respectability), dressed in the same melancholy attire. One of her attendants held an infant in her arms, the last pledge of poor Oliver's nuptial affections. Another led a little tottering creature of two years, or thereabouts, which looked with wonder and fear, sometimes on the black dress in which they had muffled him, and sometimes on the scene around him.

The assembly rose to receive the melancholy group, and saluted them with an expression of the deepest sympathy, which Magdalen, though the mate of poor Oliver, returned with an air of dignity, which she borrowed, perhaps, from the extremity of her distress. Sir Patrick Charteris then stepped forward, and with the courtesy of a knight to a female, and of a protector to an oppressed and injured widow, took the poor woman's hand, and explained to her briefly by what course the city had resolved to follow out the vengeance due for her husband's slaughter.

Having, with a softness and gentleness which did not belong to his general manner, ascertained that the unfortunate woman perfectly understood what was meant, he said aloud to the assembly, 'Good citizens of Perth, and freeborn men of guild and craft, attend to what is about to pass, for it concerns your rights and privileges. Here stands Magdalen Proudfoot, desirous to follow forth the revenge due for the death of her husband, foully murdered, as she sayeth, by Sir John Ramorny, Knight, of that ilk, and which she offers to prove, by the evidence of

bier-right, or by the body of a man. Therefore, I, Patrick Charteris, being a belted knight and freeborn gentleman, offer myself to do battle in her just quarrel, whilst man and horse may endure, if any one of my degree shall hit my glove. How say you, Magdalen Proudfoot, will you accept me for your champion?’

The widow answered with difficulty, ‘I can desire none nobler’

Sir Patrick then took her right hand in his, and, kissing her forehead, for such was the ceremony, said solemnly, ‘So may God and St John prosper me at my need, as I will do my devoir as your champion, knightly, truly, and manfully. Go now, Magdalen, and choose at your will among the burgesses of the Fair City, present or absent, any one upon whom you desire to rest your challenge, if he against whom you bring plaint shall prove to be beneath my degree’

All eyes were turned to Henry Smith, whom the general voice had already pointed out as in every respect the fittest to act as champion on the occasion. But the widow waited not for the general prompting of their looks. As soon as Sir Patrick had spoken, she crossed the floor to the place where, near the bottom of the table, the armourer stood among the men of his degree, and took him by the hand.

‘Henry Gow, or Smith,’ she said, ‘good burgher and craftsman, my — my —’

‘Husband,’ she would have said, but the word would not come forth. She was obliged to change the expression.

‘He who is gone, loved and prized you over all men, therefore meet it is that thou shouldst follow out the quarrel of his widow and orphans’

If there had been a possibility, which in that age there was not, of Henry’s rejecting or escaping from a trust for which all men seemed to destine him, every wish and idea of retreat was cut off when the widow began to address him, and a command from Heaven could hardly have made a stronger impression than did the appeal of the unfortunate Magdalen. Her allusion to his intimacy with the deceased moved him to the soul. During Oliver’s life, doubtless, there had been a strain of absurdity in his excessive predilection for Henry, which, considering how very different they were in character, had in it something ludicrous. But all this was now forgotten, and Henry, giving way to his natural ardour, only remembered that Oliver had been his friend and intimate — a man who had

loved and honoured him as much as he was capable of entertaining such sentiments for any one, and, above all, that there was much reason to suspect that the deceased had fallen victim to a blow meant for Henry himself

It was, therefore, with an alacrity which, the minute before, he could scarce have commanded, and which seemed to express a stern pleasure, that, having pressed his lips to the cold brow of the unhappy Magdalen, the armourer replied —

‘I, Henry the Smith, dwelling in the Wynd of Perth, good man and true, and freely born, accept the office of champion to this widow Magdalen and these orphans, and will do battle in their quarrel to the death, with any man whomsoever of my own degree, and that so long as I shall draw breath. So help me at my need God and good St. John!’

- There arose from the audience a half-suppressed cry, expressing the interest which the persons present took in the prosecution of the quarrel, and their confidence in the issue

Sir Patrick Charteris then took measures for repairing to the King’s presence, and demanding leave to proceed with inquiry into the murder of Oliver Proudfoot, according to the custom of bier right, and, if necessary, by combat.

He performed this duty after the town council had dissolved, in a private interview between himself and the King, who heard of this new trouble with much vexation, and appointed next morning, after mass, for Sir Patrick and the parties interested to attend his pleasure in council. In the meantime, a royal pursuivant was despatched to the Constable’s lodgings, to call over the roll of Sir John Ramorny’s attendants, and charge him, with his whole retinue, under high penalties, to abide within Perth until the King’s pleasure should be farther known.

CHAPTER XXI

In God's name, see the lists and all things fit,
There let them end it — God defend the right !

Henry IV Part II

IN the same council-room of the conventual palace of the Dominicans, King Robert was seated with his brother Albany, whose affected austerity of virtue, and real art and dissimulation, maintained so high an influence over the feeble-minded monarch. It was indeed natural that one who seldom saw things according to their real forms and outlines should view them according to the light in which they were presented to him by a bold, astucious man, possessing the claim of such near relationship.

Ever anxious on account of his misguided and unfortunate son, the King was now endeavouring to make Albany coincide in opinion with him in exculpating Rothsay from any part in the death of the bonnet-maker, the precognition concerning which had been left by Sir Patrick Charteris for his Majesty's consideration.

'This is an unhappy matter, brother Robin,' he said — 'a most unhappy occurrence, and goes nigh to put strife and quarrel betwixt the nobility and the commons here, as they have been at war together in so many distant lands. I see but one cause of comfort in the matter, and that is, that Sir John Ramorny having received his dismissal from the Duke of Rothsay's family, it cannot be said that he or any of his people who may have done this bloody deed — if it has truly been done by them — have been encouraged or hounded out upon such an errand by my poor boy. I am sure, brother, you and I can bear witness how readily, upon my entreaties, he agreed to dismiss Ramorny from his service, on account of that brawl in Curfew Street.'

'I remember his doing so,' said Albany, 'and well do I hope that the connexion betwixt the Prince and Ramorny has

not been renewed since he seemed to comply with your Grace's wishes.'

'Seemed to comply! The connexion renewed' said the King 'What mean you by these expressions, brother? Surely, when David promised to me that, if that unhappy matter of Curfew Street were but smothered up and concealed, he would part with Ramorny, as he was a counsellor thought capable of involving him in similar fooleries, and would acquiesce in our inflicting on him either exile or such punishment as it should please us to impose—surely you cannot doubt that he was sincere in his professions, and would keep his word? Remember you not that, when you advised that a heavy fine should be levied upon his estate in Fife in lieu of banishment, the Prince himself seemed to say that exile would be better for Ramorny, and even for himself?'

'I remember it well, my royal brother Nor, truly, could I have suspected Ramorny of having so much influence over the Prince, after having been accessory to placing him in a situation so perilous, had it not been for my royal kinsman's own confession, alluded to by your Grace, that, if suffered to remain at court, he might still continue to influence his conduct. I then regretted I had advised a fine in place of exile. But that time is passed, and now new mischief has occurred, fraught with much peril to your Majesty, as well as to your royal heir, and to the whole kingdom.'

'What mean you, Robin?' said the weak minded King 'By the tomb of our parents! by the soul of Bruce, our immortal ancestor! I entreat thee, my dearest brother, to take compassion on me. Tell me what evil threatens my son, or my kingdom?'

'The features of the King, trembling with anxiety, and his eyes brimful of tears, were bent upon his brother, who seemed to assume time for consideration ere he replied.

'My lord, the danger lies here. Your Grace believes that the Prince had no accession to this second aggression upon the citizens of Perth—the slaughter of this bonnet-making fellow, about whose death they clamour, as a set of gulls about their comrade, when one of the noisy brood is struck down by a boy's shaft.'

'Their lives,' said the King, 'are dear to themselves and their friends, Robin'

'Truly, ay, my liege, and they make them dear to us too, ere we can settle with the knaves for the least blood wit. But,

as I said, your Majesty thinks the Prince had no share in this last slaughter; I will not attempt to shake your belief in that delicate point, but will endeavour to believe along with you. What you think is rule for me. Robert of Albany will never think otherwise than Robert of broad Scotland'

'Thank you — thank you,' said the King, taking his brother's hand 'I knew I might rely that your affection would do justice to poor heedless Rothsay, who exposes himself to so much misconstruction that he scarcely deserves the sentiments you feel for him'

Albany had such an immovable constancy of purpose, that he was able to return the fraternal pressure of the King's hand, while tearing up by the very roots the hopes of the indulgent, fond old man

'But, alas!' the Duke continued, with a sigh, 'this burly, intractable Knight of Kinfauns, and his brawling herd of burghers, will not view the matter as we do. They have the boldness to say that this dead fellow had been misused by Rothsay and his fellows, who were in the street in mask and revel, stopping men and women, compelling them to dance, or to drink huge quantities of wine, with other follies needless to recount, and they say that the whole party repaired to Sir John Ramorny's, and broke their way into the house in order to conclude their revel there, thus affording good reason to judge that the dismissal of Sir John from the Prince's service was but a feigned stratagem to deceive the public. And hence they urge that, if ill were done that night by Sir John Ramorny or his followers, much it is to be thought that the Duke of Rothsay must have at least been privy to, if he did not authorise, it'

'Albany, this is dreadful!' said the King 'Would they make a murderer of my boy? would they pretend my David would soil his hands in Scottish blood without having either provocation or purpose? No — no, they will not invent calumnies so broad as these, for they are flagrant and incredible'

'Pardon, my liege,' answered the Duke of Albany, 'they say the cause of quarrel which occasioned the riot in Curfew Street, and its consequences, were more proper to the Prince than to Sir John, since none suspects, far less believes, that that hopeful enterprise was conducted for the gratification of the knight of Ramorny'

'Thou drivest me mad, Robin!' said the King

'I am dumb,' answered his brother, 'I did but speak my poor mind according to your royal order'

'Thou meanest well, I know,' said the King, 'but, instead of tearing me to pieces with the display of inevitable calamities, were it not kinder, Robin, to point me out some mode to escape from them?'

'True, my liege, but as the only road of extrication is rough and difficult, it is necessary your Grace should be first possessed with the absolute necessity of using it, ere you hear it even described. The chirurgeon must first convince his patient of the incurable condition of a shattered member, ere he venture to name amputation, though it be the only remedy'

The King at these words was roused to a degree of alarm and indignation greater than his brother had deemed he could be awakened to

'Shattered and mortified member, my Lord of Albany! amputation the only remedy! These are unintelligible words, my lord. If thou appliest them to our son Rothsay, thou must make them good to the letter, else mayst thou have bitter cause to rue the consequence.'

'You construe me too literally, my royal liege,' said Albany 'I spoke not of the Prince in such unbecoming terms, for I call Heaven to witness that he is dearer to me as the son of a well beloved brother than had he been son of my own. But I spoke in regard to separating him from the follies and vanities of life, which holy men say are like to mortified members, and ought, like them, to be cut off and thrown from us, as things which interrupt our progress in better things.'

'I understand — thou wouldst have this Ramorny, who hath been thought the instrument of my son's follies, exiled from court,' said the relieved monarch, 'until these unhappy scandals are forgotten, and our subjects are disposed to look upon our son with different and more confiding eyes'

'That were good counsel, my liege, but mine went a little — a very little — farther. I would have the Prince himself removed for some brief period from court.'

'How, Albany! part with my child, my first-born, the light of my eyes, and — wilful as he is — the darling of my heart! Oh, Robin! I cannot, and I will not'

'Nay, I did but suggest, my lord, I am sensible of the wound such a proceeding must inflict on a parent's heart, for am I not myself a father?' And he hung his head, as if in hopeless despondency

‘I could not survive it, Albany. When I think that even our own influence over him, which, sometimes forgotten in our absence, is ever effectual whilst he is with us, is by your plan to be entirely removed, what perils might he not rush upon? I could not sleep in his absence — I should hear his death-groan in every breeze, and you, Albany, though you conceal it better, would be nearly as anxious.’

Thus spoke the facile monarch, willing to conciliate his brother and cheat himself, by taking it for granted that an affection, of which there were no traces, subsisted betwixt the uncle and nephew.

‘Your paternal apprehensions are too easily alarmed, my lord,’ said Albany. ‘I do not propose to leave the disposal of the Prince’s motions to his own wild pleasure. I understand that the Prince is to be placed for a short time under some becoming restraint — that he should be subjected to the charge of some grave counsellor, who must be responsible both for his conduct and his safety, as a tutor for his pupil.’

‘How! a tutor, and at Rothsay’s age!’ exclaimed the King. ‘he is two years beyond the space to which our laws limit the term of nonage.’

‘The wiser Romans,’ said Albany, ‘extended it for four years after the period we assign, and, in common sense, the right of control ought to last till it be no longer necessary and so the time ought to vary with the disposition. Here is young Lindsay, the Earl of Crawford, who they say gives patronage to Ramorny on this appeal. He is a lad of fifteen, with the deep passions and fixed purpose of a man of thirty; while my royal nephew, with much more amiable and noble qualities both of head and heart, sometimes shows, at twenty-three years of age, the wanton humours of a boy, towards whom restraint may be kindness. And do not be discouraged that it is so, my liege, or angry with your brother for telling the truth, since the best fruits are those that are slowest in ripening, and the best horses such as give most trouble to the grooms who train them for the field or lists.’

The Duke stopped, and, after suffering King Robert to indulge for two or three minutes in a reverie which he did not attempt to interrupt, he added, in a more lively tone — ‘But, cheer up, my noble liege, perhaps the feud may be made up without farther fighting or difficulty. The widow is poor, for her husband, though he was much employed, had idle and costly habits. The matter may be therefore redeemed for

money, and the amount of an assythment may be recovered out of Ramorny's estate.'

'Nay, that we will ourselves discharge,' said King Robert, eagerly catching at the hope of a pacific termination of this unpleasing debate. 'Ramorny's prospects will be destroyed by his being sent from court and deprived of his charge in Rothsay's household, and it would be ungenerous to load a falling man. But here comes our secretary, the prior, to tell us the hour of council approaches. Good morrow, my worthy father.'

'*Benedicite*, my royal liege,' answered the abbot.

'Now, good father,' continued the King, 'without waiting for Rothsay, whose accession to our counsels we will ourselves guarantee, proceed we to the business of our kingdom. What advices have you from the Douglas?'

'He has arrived at his castle of Tantallon, my liege, and has sent a post to say, that, though the Earl of March remains in sullen seclusion in his fortress of Dunbar, his friends and followers are gathering and forming an encampment near Coldingham, where it is supposed they intend to await the arrival of a large force of English, which Hotspur and Sir Ralph Percy are assembling on the English frontier.'

'That is cold news,' said the King, 'and may God forgive George of Dunbar!' The Prince entered as he spoke, and he continued — 'Ha! thou art here at length, Rothsay, I saw thee not at mass.'

'I was an idler this morning,' said the Prince, 'having spent a restless and feverish night.'

'Ah, foolish boy!' answered the King, 'hadst thou not been over-restless on Fastern's Eve, thou hadst not been feverish on the night of Ash Wednesday.'

'Let me not interrupt your prayers, my liege,' said the Prince, lightly. 'Your Grace was invoking Heaven in behalf of some one — an enemy doubtless, for these have the frequent advantage of your orisons.'

'Sit down and be at peace, foolish youth!' said his father, his eye resting at the same time on the handsome face and graceful figure of his favourite son. Rothsay drew a cushion near to his father's feet, and threw himself carelessly down upon it, while the King resumed.

'I was regretting that the Earl of March, having separated warm from my hand with full assurance that he should receive compensation for everything which he could complain of as

injurious, should have been capable of caballing with Northumberland against his own country. Is it possible he could doubt our intentions to make good our word?’

‘I will answer for him — no,’ said the Prince ‘March never doubted your Highness’s word. Marry, he may well have made question whether your learned counsellors would leave your Majesty the power of keeping it’

Robert the Third had adopted to a great extent the timid policy of not seeming to hear expressions which, being heard, required, even in his own eyes, some display of displeasure. He passed on, therefore, in his discourse, without observing his son’s speech, but in private Rothsay’s rashness augmented the displeasure which his father began to entertain against him.

‘It is well the Douglas is on the marches,’ said the King. ‘His breast, like those of his ancestors, has ever been the best bulwark of Scotland’

‘Then woe betide us if he should turn his back to the enemy,’ said the incorrigible Rothsay.

‘Dare you impeach the courage of Douglas?’ replied the King, extremely chafed.

‘No man dare question the Earl’s courage,’ said Rothsay, ‘it is as certain as his pride, but his luck may be something doubted.’

‘By St Andrew, David,’ exclaimed his father, ‘thou art like a screech-owl, every word thou sayest betokens strife and calamity’

‘I am silent, father,’ answered the youth.

‘And what news of our Highland disturbances?’ continued the King, addressing the prior.

‘I trust they have assumed a favourable aspect,’ answered the clergyman. ‘The fire which threatened the whole country is likely to be drenched out by the blood of some forty or fifty kerne, for the two great confederacies have agreed, by solemn indenture of arms, to decide their quarrel with such weapons as your Highness may name, and in your royal presence, in such place as shall be appointed, on the 30th of March next to come, being Palm Sunday, the number of combatants being limited to thirty on each side, and the fight to be maintained to extremity, since they affectionately make humble suit and petition to your Majesty that you will parentally condescend to wave for the day your royal privilege of interrupting the combat, by flinging down of truncheon, or crying of “Ho!” until the battle shall be utterly fought to an end’

'The wild savages!' exclaimed the King, 'would they limit our best and dearest royal privilege, that of putting a stop to strife, and crying truce to battle? Will they remove the only motive which could bring me to the butcherly spectacle of their combat? Would they fight like men, or like their own mountain wolves?'

'My lord,' said Albany, 'the Earl of Crawford and I had presumed, without consulting you, to ratify that preliminary, for the adoption of which we saw much and pressing reason.'

'How! the Earl of Crawford!' said the King, 'Methinks he is a young counsellor on such grave occurrents.'

'He is,' replied Albany, 'notwithstanding his early years, of such esteem among his Highland neighbours, that I could have done little with them but for his aid and influence.'

'Hear this, young Rothsay!' said the King reproachfully to his heir

'I pity Crawford, sire,' replied the Prince, 'He has too early lost a father whose counsels would have better become such a season as this.'

The King turned next towards Albany with a look of triumph, at the filial affection which his son displayed in his reply.

Albany proceeded without emotion. 'It is not the life of these Highlandmen, but their death, which is to be profitable to this commonwealth of Scotland, and truly it seemed to the Earl of Crawford and myself most desirable that the combat should be a strife of extermination.'

'Marry,' said the Prince, 'if such be the juvenile policy of Lindsay, he will be a merciful ruler some ten or twelve years hence! Out upon a boy that is hard of heart before he has hair upon his lip! Better he had contented himself with fighting cocks on Eastern's Even than laying schemes for murthering men on Palm Sunday, as if he were backing a Welsh man, where all must fight to death.'

'Rothsay is right, Albany,' said the King, 'it were unlike a Christian monarch to give way in this point. I cannot consent to see men battle until they are all hewn down like cattle in the shambles. It would sicken me to look at it, and the warder would drop from my hand for mere lack of strength to hold it.'

'It would drop unheeded,' said Albany, 'Let me entreat your Grace to recollect, that you only gave up a royal privilege which, exercised, would win you no respect, since it would receive no obedience. Were your Majesty to throw down your

warder when the war is high, and these men's blood is hot, it would meet no more regard than if a sparrow should drop among a herd of battling wolves the straw which he was carrying to his nest. Nothing will separate them but the exhaustion of slaughter, and better they sustain it at the hands of each other than from the swords of such troops as might attempt to separate them at your Majesty's commands. An attempt to keep the peace by violence would be construed into an ambush laid for them, both parties would unite to resist it, the slaughter would be the same, and the hoped-for results of future peace would be utterly disappointed.'

'There is even too much truth in what you say, brother Robin,' replied the flexible King. 'To little purpose is it to command what I cannot enforce, and, although I have the unhappiness to do so each day of my life, it were needless to give such a very public example of royal impotency before the crowds who may assemble to behold this spectacle. Let these savage men, therefore, work their bloody will to the uttermost upon each other. I will not attempt to forbid what I cannot prevent them from executing. Heaven help this wretched country! I will to my oratory and pray for her, since to aid her by hand and head is alike denied to me. Father prior, I pray the support of your arm.'

'Nay, but, brother,' said Albany, 'forgive me if I remind you that we must hear the matter between the citizens of Perth and Ramorny, about the death of a townsman ——'

'True — true,' said the monarch, reseating himself, 'more violence — more battle. Oh, Scotland! Scotland! if the best blood of thy bravest children could enrich thy barren soil, what land on earth would excel thee in fertility! When is it that a white hair is seen on the beard of a Scottishman, unless he be some wretch like thy sovereign, protected from murder by impotence, to witness the scenes of slaughter to which he cannot put a period? Let them come in — delay them not. They are in haste to kill, and grudge each other each fresh breath of their Creator's blessed air. The demon of strife and slaughter hath possessed the whole land!'

As the mild prince threw himself back on his seat with an air of impatience and anger not very usual with him, the door at the lower end of the room was unclosed, and, advancing from the gallery into which it led (where in perspective was seen a guard of the Bute men, or Brandanes, under arms), came, in mournful procession, the widow of poor Oliver, led by Sir

Patrick Charteris, with as much respect as if she had been a lady of the first rank. Behind them came two women of good, the wives of magistrates of the city, both in mourning garments, one bearing the infant and the other leading the elder child. The smith followed in his best attire, and wearing over his buff coat a scarf of crape. Bailie Craigdallie and a brother magistrate closed the melancholy procession, exhibiting similar marks of mourning.

The good King's transitory passion was gone the instant he looked on the pallid countenance of the sorrowing widow, and beheld the unconsciousness of the innocent orphans who had sustained so great a loss, and when Sir Patrick Charteris had assisted Magdalen Proudfoot to kneel down, and, still holding her hand, kneeled himself on one knee, it was with a sympathetic tone that King Robert asked her name and business. She made no answer, but muttered something, looking towards her conductor.

'Speak for the poor woman, Sir Patrick Charteris,' said the King, 'and tell us the cause of her seeking our presence.'

'So please you, my liege,' answered Sir Patrick, rising up, 'this woman, and these unhappy orphans, make plaint to your Highness upon Sir John Ramorny of Ramorny, Knight, that by him, or by some of his household, her unquhile husband, Oliver Proudfoot, freeman and burgess of Perth, was slain upon the streets of the city on the eve of Shrove Tuesday or morning of Ash Wednesday.'

'Woman,' replied the King, with much kindness, 'thou art gentle by sex, and shouldst be pitiful even by thy affliction, for our own calamity ought to make us — nay, I think it doth make us — merciful to others. Thy husband hath only trodden the path appointed to us all.'

'In his case,' said the widow, 'my liege must remember it has been a brief and a bloody one.'

'I agree he hath had foul measure. But since I have been unable to protect him, as I confess was my royal duty, I am willing, in atonement, to support thee and these orphans, as well or better than you lived in the days of your husband, only do thou pass from this charge, and be not the occasion of spilling more life. Remember, I put before you the choice betwixt practising mercy and pursuing vengeance, and that betwixt plenty and penury.'

'It is true, my liege, we are poor,' answered the widow, with unshaken firmness, 'but I and my children will feed with

the beasts of the field ere we live on the price of my husband's blood I demand the combat by my champion, as you are belted knight and crowned king'

'I knew it would be so!' said the King, aside to Albany. 'In Scotland the first words stammered by an infant and the last uttered by a dying greybeard are "combat — blood — revenge" It skills not arguing further. Admit the defendants'

Sir John Ramorny entered the apartment. He was dressed in a long furred robe, such as men of quality wore when they were unarmed. Concealed by the folds of drapery, his wounded arm was supported by a scarf or sling of crimson silk, and with the left arm he leaned on a youth, who, scarcely beyond the years of boyhood, bore on his brow the deep impression of early thought and premature passion. This was¹ that celebrated Lindsay, Earl of Crawford, who, in his after days, was known by the epithet of the Tiger Earl, and who ruled the great and rich valley of Strathmore with the absolute power and unrelenting cruelty of a feudal tyrant. Two or three gentlemen, friends of the Earl, or of his own, countenanced Sir John Ramorny by their presence on this occasion. The charge was again stated, and met by a broad denial on the part of the accused, and in reply, the challengers offered to prove their assertion by an appeal to the ordeal of bier-right.

'I am not bound,' answered Sir John Ramorny, 'to submit to this ordeal, since I can prove, by the evidence of my late royal master, that I was in my own lodgings, lying on my bed, ill at ease, while this provost and these bailies pretend I was committing a crime to which I had neither will nor temptation. I can therefore be no just object of suspicion.'

'I can aver,' said the Prince, 'that I saw and conversed with Sir John Ramorny about some matters concerning my own household on the very night when this murder was a-doing. I therefore know that he was ill at ease, and could not in person commit the deed in question. But I know nothing of the employment of his attendants, and will not take it upon me to say that some one of them may not have been guilty of the crime now charged on them'

Sir John Ramorny had, during the beginning of this speech, looked round with an air of defiance, which was somewhat disconcerted by the concluding sentence of Rothsay's speech. 'I thank your Highness,' he said, with a smile, 'for your cautious

¹ Sir David Lyndsay, first Earl of Crawford, and brother-in-law to Robert III. [The Tiger Earl was Alexander, the fourth earl.]

and limited testimony in my behalf. He was wise who wrote, "Put not your faith in princes."

'If you have no other evidence of your innocence, Sir John Ramorny,' said the King, 'we may not, in respect to your followers, refuse to the injured widow and orphans, the complainers, the grant of a proof by ordeal of bier-right, unless any of them should prefer that of combat. For yourself, you are, by the Prince's evidence, freed from the attaint.'

'My liege,' answered Sir John, 'I can take warrant upon myself for the innocence of my household and followers.'

'Why, so a monk or a woman might speak,' said Sir Patrick Charteris. 'In knightly language, wilt thou, Sir John de Ramorny, do battle with me in the behalf of thy followers?'

'The provost of Perth had not obtained time to name the word combat,' said Ramorny, 'ere I would have accepted it. But I am not at present fit to hold a lance.'

'I am glad of it, under your favour, Sir John. There will be the less bloodshed,' said the King. 'You must therefore produce your followers according to your steward's household book, in the great church of St. John, that, in presence of all whom it may concern, they may purge themselves of this accusation. See that every man of them do appear at the time of high mass, otherwise your honour may be sorely tainted.'

'They shall attend to a man,' said Sir John Ramorny. Then bowing low to the King, he directed himself to the young Duke of Rothsay, and, making a deep obeisance, spoke so as to be heard by him alone. 'You have used me generously, my lord! One word of your lips could have ended this controversy, and you have refused to speak it.'

'On my life,' whispered the Prince, 'I spake as far as the extreme verge of truth and conscience would permit. I think thou couldst not expect I should frame lies for thee, and after all, John, in my broken recollections of that night, I do bethink me of a butcherly-looking mute, with a curtal axe, much like such a one as may have done yonder night-job. Ha! have I touched you, sir knight?'

Ramorny made no answer, but turned away as precipitately as if some one had pressed suddenly on his wounded arm, and regained his lodgings with the Earl of Crawford, to whom, though disposed for anything rather than revelry, he was obliged to offer a splendid collation, to acknowledge in some degree his sense of the countenance which the young noble had afforded him.

CHAPTER XXII

In pottingry he wrocht great pyne ;
He murreit mony in medecyne

DUNBAR

WHEN, after an entertainment the prolonging of which was like torture to the wounded knight, the Earl of Crawford at length took horse, to go to his distant quarters in the Castle of Dupplin, where he resided as a guest, the Knight of Ramorny retired into his sleeping-apartment, agonized by pains of body and anxiety of mind. Here he found Henbane Dwinning, on whom it was his hard fate to depend for consolation in both respects. The physician, with his affectation of extreme humility, hoped he saw his exalted patient merry and happy.

‘Merry as a mad dog,’ said Ramorny, ‘and happy as the wretch whom the cur hath bitten, and who begins to feel the approach of the ravening madness!’ That ruthless boy, Crawford, saw my agony, and spared not a single carouse. I must do him *justice*, forsooth! If I had done justice to him and to the world, I had thrown him out of window, and cut short a career which, if he grow up as he has begun, will prove a source of misery to all Scotland, but especially to Tayside. Take heed as thou undoest the ligatures, chirurgion the touch of a fly’s wing on that raw glowing stump were like a dagger to me.’

‘Fear not, my noble patron,’ said the leech, with a chuckling laugh of enjoyment, which he vainly endeavoured to disguise under a tone of affected sensibility. ‘We will apply some fresh balsam, and — he, he, he! — relieve your knightly honour of the irritation which you sustain so firmly.’

‘Firmly, man!’ said Ramorny, grinning with pain, ‘I sustain it as I would the scorching flames of purgatory. The bone seems made of red-hot iron, thy greasy ointment will hiss as it drops upon the wound. And yet it is December’s ice, compared to the fever-fit of my mind!’

‘We will first use our emollients upon the body, my noble

patron,' said Dwining, 'and then, with your knighthood's permission, your servant will try his art on the troubled mind, though I fain hope even the mental pain also may in some degree depend on the irritation of the wound, and that, abated as I trust the corporeal pangs will soon be, perhaps the stormy feelings of the mind may subside of themselves.'

'Henbane Dwining,' said the patient, as he felt the pain of his wound assuaged, 'thou art a precious and invaluable leech, but some things are beyond thy power. Thou canst stupify my bodily sense of this raging agony, but thou canst not teach me to bear the scorn of the boy whom I have brought up — whom I loved, Dwining — for I did love him — dearly love him! The worst of my ill deeds have been to flatter his vices, and he grudged me a word of his mouth, when a word would have allayed this cumber! He smiled, too — I saw him smile — when yon paltry provost, the companion and patron of wretched burghers, defied me, whom this heartless prince knew to be unable to bear arms. Ere I forget or forgive it, thou thyself shalt preach up the pardoning of injuries! And then the care for to-morrow! Think'st thou, Henbane Dwining, that, in very reality, the wounds of the slaughtered corpse will gape and shed tears of fresh blood at the murderer's approach?'

'I cannot tell, my lord, save by report,' said Dwining, 'which avouches the fact.'

'The brute Bonthron,' said Ramorny, 'is startled at the apprehension of such a thing, and speaks of being rather willing to stand the combat. What think'st thou? He is a fellow of steel.'

'It is the armourer's trade to deal with steel,' replied Dwining.

'Were Bonthron to fall, it would little grieve me,' said Ramorny, 'though I should miss an useful hand.'

'I well believe your lordship will not sorrow as for that you lost in Curfew Street. Excuse my pleasantry — he, he, he! But what are the useful properties of this fellow Bonthron?'

'Those of a bull dog,' answered the knight 'he worries without barking.'

'You have no fear of his confessing?' said the physician.

'Who can tell what the dread of approaching death may do?' replied the patient. 'He has already shown a timorousness entirely alien from his ordinary sullenness of nature, he, that would scarce wash his hands after he had slain a man, is now afraid to see a dead body bleed.'

am a high clerk, and have studied in Spain, and Araby itself, not be able to deceive the eyes of this hoggish herd of citizens, when the pettiest juggler that ever dealt in legerdemain can gull even the sharp observation of your most intelligent knight-hood! I tell you, I will put the change on them as if I were in possession of Keddie's ring'

'If thou speakest truth,' answered the knight, 'and I think thou dar'st not palter with me on such a theme, thou must have the aid of Satan, and I will have nought to do with him I disown and defy him.'

Dwining indulged in his internal chuckling laugh when he heard his patron testify his defiance of the foul fiend, and saw him second it by crossing himself. He composed himself, however, upon observing Ramorny's aspect become very stern, and said, with tolerable gravity, though a little interrupted by the effort necessary to suppress his mirthful mood—

'Confederacy, most devout sir—confederacy is the soul of jugglery. But—he, he, he!—I have not the honour to be—he, he!—an ally of the gentleman of whom you speak—in whose existence I am—he, he!—no very profound believer, though your knightship, doubtless, hath better opportunities of acquaintance.'

'Proceed, rascal, and without that sneer, which thou mayst otherwise dearly pay for'

'I will, most undaunted,' replied Dwining. 'Know that I have my confederate too, else my skill were little worth.'

'And who may that be, pray you?'

'Stephen Smotherwell, if it like your honour, lockman¹ of this Fair City. I marvel your knighthood knows him not.'

'And I marvel thy knaveship knows him not on professional acquaintance,' replied Ramorny, 'but I see thy nose is unslit, thy ears yet uncropped, and if thy shoulders are scarred or branded, thou art wise for using a high collared jerkin.'

'He, he! your honour is pleasant,' said the mediciner. 'It is not by personal circumstances that I have acquired the intimacy of Stephen Smotherwell, but on account of a certain traffic betwixt us, in which, an't please you, I exchange certain sums of silver for the bodies, heads, and limbs of those who die by aid of friend Stephen.'

'Wretch!' exclaimed the knight with horror, 'is it to compose charms and forward works of witchcraft that you trade for these miserable relics of mortality?'

¹ See Note 41

'He, he, he!' No, an it please your knighthood,' answered the mediciner, much amused with the ignorance of his patron, 'but we, who are knights of the scalpel, are accustomed to practise careful carving of the limbs of defunct persons, which we call dissection, whereby we discover, by examination of a dead member, how to deal with one belonging to a living man, which hath become diseased through injury or otherwise. Ah! if your honour saw my poor laboratory, I could show you heads and hands, feet and lungs, which have been long supposed to be rotting in the mould. The skull of Wallace, stolen from London Bridge, the heart of Sir Simon Fraser,¹ that never feared man, the lovely skull of the fair Katie Logie² Oh, had I but had the fortune to have preserved the chivalrous hand of mine honoured patron!'

'Out upon thee, slave!' Thinkest thou to disgust me with thy catalogue of horrors? Tell me at once where thy discourse drives. How can thy traffic with the hangdog executioner be of avail to serve me, or to help my servant Bonthron?'

'Nay, I do not recommend it to your knighthood, save in an extremity,' replied Dwining. 'But we will suppose the battle fought and our cock beaten. Now we must first possess him with the certainty that, if unable to gain the day, we will at least save him from the hangman, provided he confess nothing which can prejudice your knighthood's honour.'

'Ha! ay, a thought strikes me,' said Ramorny. 'We can do more than this, we can place a word in Bonthron's mouth that will be troublesome enough to him whom I am bound to curse for being the cause of my misfortune. Let us to the ban-dog's kennel, and explain to him what is to be done in every view of the question. If we can persuade him to stand the bier-ordeal, it may be a mere bugbear, and in that case we are safe. If he take the combat, he is fierce as a baited bear, and may, perchance, master his opponent, then we are more than safe, we are revenged. If Bonthron himself is vanquished, we will put thy device in exercise, and if thou canst manage it cleanly, we may dictate his confession, take the advantage of it, as I will show thee on further conference, and make a giant stride towards satisfaction for my wrongs. Still there remains one hazard. Suppose our mastiff mortally wounded in the lists, who shall prevent his growling out some species of confession different from what we would recommend?'

¹ The famous ancestor of the Lovats, slain at Halidon Hill [executed in London in 1306]

² [Should be Margaret Logie], the beautiful mistress of David II

'Marry, that can his mediciner,' said Dwining 'Let me wait on him, and have the opportunity to lay but a finger on his wound, and trust me he shall betray no confidence.'

'Why, there's a willing fiend, that needs neither pushing nor prompting!' said Ramorny

'As I trust I shall need neither in your knighthood's service.'

'We will go indoctrinate our agent,' continued the knight. 'We shall find him pliant, for, hound as he is, he knows those who feed from those who browbeat him, and he holds a late royal master of mine in deep hate for some injurious treatment and base terms which he received at his hand. I must also farther concert with thee the particulars of thy practice, for saving the ban dog from the hands of the herd of citizens.'

We leave this worthy pair of friends to their secret practices, of which we shall afterwards see the results. They were, although of different qualities, as well matched for device and execution of criminal projects as the greyhound is to destroy the game which the slowhound raises, or the slowhound to track the prey which the gazehound discovers by the eye. Pride and selfishness were the characteristics of both, but, from the difference of rank, education, and talents, they had assumed the most different appearance in the two individuals

Nothing could less resemble the high-blown ambition of the favourite courtier, the successful gallant, and the bold warrior than the submissive, unassuming mediciner, who seemed even to court and delight in insult, whilst, in his secret soul, he felt himself possessed of a superiority of knowledge, a power both of science and of mind, which placed the rude nobles of the day infinitely beneath him. So conscious was Henbane Dwining of this elevation, that, like a keeper of wild beasts, he sometimes adventured, for his own amusement, to rouse the stormy passions of such men as Ramorny, trusting, with his humble manner, to elude the turmoil he had excited, as an Indian boy will launch his light canoe, secure from its very fragility, upon a broken surf, in which the boat of an argosy would be assuredly dashed to pieces. That the feudal baron should despise the humble practitioner in medicine was a matter of course, but Ramorny felt not the less the influence which Dwining exercised over him, and was in the encounter of their wits often mastered by him, as the most eccentric efforts of a fiery horse are overcome by a boy of twelve years old, if he has been bred to the arts of the manega. But the contempt of

Dwining for Ramorny was far less qualified. He regarded the knight, in comparison with himself, as scarcely rising above the brute creation, capable, indeed, of working destruction, as the bull with his horns or the wolf with his fangs, but mastered by mean prejudices, and a slave to priestcraft, in which phrase Dwining included religion of every kind. On the whole, he considered Ramorny as one whom nature had assigned to him as a serf, to mine for the gold which he worshipped, and the avaricious love of which was his greatest failing, though by no means his worst vice. He vindicated this sordid tendency in his own eyes by persuading himself that it had its source in the love of power.

'Heubane Dwining,' he said, as he gazed in delight upon the hoards which he had secretly amassed, and which he visited from time to time, 'is no silly miser that doats on those pieces for their golden lustre. It is the power with which they endow the possessor which makes him thus adore them. What is there that these put not within your command? Do you love beauty, and are mean, deformed, infirm, and old? Here is a lure the fairest hawk of them all will stoop to. Are you feeble, weak, subject to the oppression of the powerful? Here is that will arm in your defence those more mighty than the petty tyrant whom you fear. Are you splendid in your wishes, and desire the outward show of opulence? This dark chest contains many a wide range of hill and dale, many a fair forest full of game, the allegiance of a thousand vassals. Wish you for favour in courts, temporal or spiritual? The smiles of kings, the pardon of popes and priests for old crimes, and the indulgence which encourages priest-ridden fools to venture on new ones—all these holy incentives to vice may be purchased for gold. Revenge itself, which the gods are said to reserve to themselves, doubtless because they envy humanity so sweet a morsel—revenge itself is to be bought by it. But it is also to be won by superior skill, and that is the nobler mode of reaching it. I will spare, then, my treasure for other uses, and accomplish my revenge gratis, or rather I will add the luxury of augmented wealth to the triumph of requited wrongs.'

Thus thought Dwining, as, returned from his visit to Sir John Ramorny, he added the gold he had received for his various services to the mass of his treasure, and, having gloated over the whole for a minute or two, turned the key on his concealed treasure-house, and walked forth on his visits to his patients, yielding the wall to every man whom he met, and

bowing and doffing his bonnet to the poorest burgher that owned a petty booth, nay, to the artificers who gained their precarious bread by the labour of their welked hands.

'Caitiffs,' was the thought of his heart while he did such obeisance — 'base, sodden-witted mechanics! did you know what this key could disclose, what foul weather from heaven would prevent your unbonneting? what putrid kennel in your wretched hamlet would be disgusting enough to make you scruple to fall down and worship the owner of such wealth? But I will make you feel my power, though it suits my humour to hide the source of it. I will be an incubus to your city, since you have rejected me as a magistrate. Like the nightmare, I will hag-ride ye, yet remain invisible myself. This miserable Ramorny, too, he who, in losing his hand, has, like a poor artisan, lost the only valuable part of his frame, *he* heaps insulting language on me, as if anything which *he* can say had power to chafe a constant mind like mine! Yet, while he calls me rogue, villain, and slave, he acts as wisely as if he should amuse himself by pulling hairs out of my head while my hand had hold of his heart-strings. Every insult I can pay back instantly by a pang of bodily pain or mental agony, and — he, he! — I run no long accounts with his knighthood, that must be allowed.'

While the mediciner was thus indulging his diabolical musing, and passing, in his creeping manner, along the street, the cry of females was heard behind him.

'Ay, there he is, Our Lady be praised! — there is the most helpful man in Perth,' said one voice.

'They may speak of knights and kings for redressing wrongs, as they call it, but give me worthy Master Dwining the potter-carrier, cummers,' replied another.

At the same moment, the leech was surrounded and taken hold of by the speakers, good women of the Fair City.

'How now, what's the matter?' said Dwining, 'whose cow has calved?'

'There is no calving in the case,' said one of the women, 'but a poor fatherless wean dying, so come awa' wi' you, for our trust is constant in you, as Bruce said to Donald of the Isles.'

'*Opiferque per orbem dicor*,' said Henbane Dwining. 'What is the child dying of?'

'The croup — the croup,' screamed one of the gossips, 'the innocent is roupung like a corbie.'

'*Cynanche trachealis* — that disease makes brief work' Show me the house instantly,' continued the mediciner, who was in the habit of exercising his profession liberally, notwithstanding his natural avarice, and humanely, in spite of his natural malignity. As we can suspect him of no better principle, his motive most probably may have been vanity and the love of his art

He would nevertheless have declined giving his attendance in the present case had he known whither the kind gossips were conducting him, in time sufficient to frame an apology. But, ere he guessed where he was going, the leech was hurried into the house of the late Oliver Proudfoot, from which he heard the chant of the women as they swathed and dressed the corpse of the umquhile bonnet-maker for the ceremony of next morning, of which chant the following verses may be received as a modern imitation —

Viewless essence, thin and bare,
Wellnigh melted into air,
Still with fondness hovering near
The earthly form thou once didst wear,

Pause upon thy pinion's flight,
Be thy course to left or right,
Be thou doom'd to soar or sink,
Pause upon the awful brink

To avenge the deed expelling
Thee untimely from thy dwelling,
Mystic force thou shalt retain
O'er the blood and o'er the brain

When the form thou shalt espy
That darken'd on thy closing eye,
When the footstep thou shalt hear
That thrill'd upon thy dying ear,

Then strange sympathies shall wake,
The flesh shall thrill, the nerves shall quake,
The wounds renew their clotted flood,
And every drop cry blood for blood !

Hardened as he was, the physician felt reluctance to pass the threshold of the man to whose death he had been so directly, though, so far as the individual was concerned, mistakingly, accessory

'Let me pass on, women,' he said, 'my art can only help the living — the dead are past our power'

'Nay, but your patient is upstairs — the youngest orphan —'

Dwining was compelled to go into the house. But he was surprised when, the instant he stepped over the threshold, the gossips, who were busied with the dead body, stinted suddenly in their song, while one said to the others —

'In God's name, who entered? That was a large gout of blood.'

'Not so,' said another voice, 'it is a drop of the liquid balm.'

'Nay, cummer, it was blood. Again I say, who entered the house even now?'

One looked out from the apartment into the little entrance, where Dwining, under pretence of not distinctly seeing the trap ladder by which he was to ascend into the upper part of this house of lamentation, was delaying his progress purposely, disconcerted with what had reached him of the conversation.

'Nay, it is only worthy Master Henbane Dwining,' answered one of the sibyls.

'Only Master Dwining,' replied the one who had first spoken, in a tone of acquiescence — 'our best helper in need! Then it must have been balm sure enough.'

'Nay,' said the other, 'it may have been blood nevertheless, for the leech, look you, when the body was found, was commanded by the magistrates to probe the wound with his instruments, and how could the poor dead corpse know that that was done with good purpose?'

'Ay, truly, cummer, and as poor gossip Oliver often mistook friends for enemies while he was in life, his judgment cannot be thought to have mended now.'

Dwining heard no more, being now forced upstairs into a species of garret, where Magdalen sat on her widowed bed, clasping to her bosom her infant, which, already black in the face, and uttering the gasping, crowing sound which gives the popular name to the complaint, seemed on the point of rendering up its brief existence. A Dominican monk sat near the bed, holding the other child in his arms, and seeming from time to time to speak a word or two of spiritual consolation, or intermingle some observation on the child's disorder.

The mediciner cast upon the good father a single glance, filled with that ineffable disdain which men of science entertain against interlopers. His own aid was instant and efficacious against interlopers. His own aid was instant and efficacious he snatched the child from the despairing mother, stripped its

throat, and opened a vein, which, as it bled freely, relieved the little patient instantaneously. In a brief space every dangerous symptom disappeared, and Dwining, having bound up the vein, replaced the infant in the arms of the half-distracted mother.

The poor woman's distress for her husband's loss, which had been suspended during the extremity of the child's danger, now returned on Magdalen with the force of an augmented torrent, which has borne down the dam-dike that for a while interrupted its waves.

'Oh, learned sir,' she said, 'you see a poor woman of her that you once knew a richer. But the hands that restored this bairn to my arms must not leave this house empty. Generous, kind Master Dwining, accept of his beads, they are made of ebony and silver. He aye liked to have his things as handsome as any gentleman, and liker he was in all his ways to a gentleman than any one of his standing, and even so came of it.'

With these words, in a mute passion of grief she pressed to her breast and to her lips the chaplet of her deceased husband, and proceeded to thrust it into Dwining's hands.

'Take it,' she said, 'for the love of one who loved you well. Ah! he used ever to say, if ever man could be brought back from the brink of the grave, it must be by Master Dwining's guidance. And his ain bairn is brought back this blessed day, and he is lying there stark and stiff, and kens naething of its health and sickness! O, woe is me, and walawa! But take the beads, and think on his puir soul as you put them through your fingers. he will be freed from purgatory the sooner that good people pray to assoilzie him.'

'Take back your beads, cummer, I know no legerdemain, can do no conjuring tricks,' said the mediciner, who, more moved than perhaps his rugged nature had anticipated, endeavoured to avoid receiving the ill-omened gift. But his last words gave offence to the churchman, whose presence he had not recollected when he uttered them.

'How now, sir leech!' said the Dominican, 'do you call prayers for the dead juggling tricks? I know that Chaucer, the English maker, says of you mediciners, that your study is but little on the Bible. Our mother, the church, hath nodded of late, but her eyes are now opened to discern friends from foes; and be well assured——'

'Nay, reverend father,' said Dwining, 'you take me at too

great advantage. I said I could do no miracles, and was about to add that, as the church certainly could work such conclusions, those rich beads should be deposited in your hands, to be applied as they may best benefit the soul of the deceased.'

He dropped the beads into the Dominican's hand, and escaped from the house of mourning.

'This was a strangely timed visit,' he said to himself, when he got safe out of doors. 'I hold such things cheap as any can, yet, though it is but a silly fancy, I am glad I saved the squalling child's life. But I must to my friend Smotherwell, whom I have no doubt to bring to my purpose in the matter of Bonthron, and thus on this occasion I shall save two lives, and have destroyed only one.'

CHAPTER XXIII

Lo ! where he lies embalmed in gore,
His wound to Heaven cries ,
The floodgates of his blood implore
For vengeance from the skies

Uranus and Psyche.

THE High Church of St John in Perth, being that of the patron saint of the burgh, had been selected by the magistrates as that in which the community was likely to have most fair play for the display of the ordeal. The churches and convents of the Dominicans, Carthusians, and others of the regular clergy had been highly endowed by the King and nobles, and therefore it was the universal cry of the city-council that 'their ain good auld St John,' of whose good graces they thought themselves sure, ought to be fully confided in, and preferred to the new patrons, for whom the Dominicans, Carthusians, Carmelites, and others had founded newer seats around the Fair City. The disputes between the regular and secular clergy added to the jealousy which dictated this choice of the spot in which Heaven was to display a species of miracle, upon a direct appeal to the divine decision in a case of doubtful guilt, and the town-clerk was as anxious that the church of St John should be preferred as if there had been a faction in the body of saints for and against the interests of the beautiful town of Perth.

Many, therefore, were the petty intrigues entered into and disconcerted for the purpose of fixing on the church. But the magistrates, considering it as a matter touching in a close degree the honour of the city, determined, with judicious confidence in the justice and impartiality of their patron, to confide the issue to the influence of St John.

It was, therefore, after high mass had been performed with the greatest solemnity of which circumstances rendered the ceremony capable, and after the most repeated and fervent prayers had been offered to Heaven by the crowded assembly,

that preparations were made for appealing to the direct judgment of Heaven on the mysterious murder of the unfortunate bonnet-maker

The scene presented that effect of imposing solemnity which the rites of the Catholic Church are so well qualified to produce. The eastern window, richly and variously painted, streamed down a torrent of chequered light upon the high altar. On the bier placed before it were stretched the mortal remains of the murdered man, his arms folded on his breast, and his palms joined together, with the fingers pointed upwards, as if the senseless clay was itself appealing to Heaven for vengeance against those who had violently divorced the immortal spirit from its mangled tenement.

Close to the bier was placed the throne which supported Robert of Scotland and his brother Albany. The Prince sat upon a lower stool, beside his father — an arrangement which occasioned some observation, as, Albany's seat being little distinguished from that of the King, the heir apparent, though of full age, seemed to be degraded beneath his uncle in the sight of the assembled people of Perth. The bier was so placed as to leave the view of the body it sustained open to the greater part of the multitude assembled in the church.

At the head of the bier stood the Knight of Kinfauns, the challenger, and at the foot the young Earl of Crawford, as representing the defendant. The evidence of the Duke of Rothsay in expurgation, as it was termed, of Sir John Ramorny, had exempted him from the necessity of attendance as a party subjected to the ordeal, and his illness served as a reason for his remaining at home. His household, including those who, though immediately in waiting upon Sir John, were accounted the Prince's domestics, and had not yet received their dismissal, amounted to eight or ten persons, most of them esteemed men of profligate habits, and who might therefore be deemed capable, in the riot of a festival evening, of committing the slaughter of the bonnet-maker. They were drawn up in a row on the left side of the church, and wore a species of white cassock, resembling the dress of a penitentiary. All eyes being bent on them, several of this band seemed so much disconcerted as to excite among the spectators strong prepossessions of their guilt. The real murderer had a countenance incapable of betraying him — a sullen, dark look, which neither the feast nor wine cup could enliven, and which the peril of discovery and death could not render dejected.

We have already noticed the posture of the dead body. The face was bare, as were the breast and arms. The rest of the corpse was shrouded in a winding-sheet of the finest linen, so that, if blood should flow from any place which was covered, it could not fail to be instantly manifest.

High mass having been performed, followed by a solemn invocation to the Deity, that He would be pleased to protect the innocent, and make known the guilty, Eviot, Sir John Ramorny's page, was summoned to undergo the ordeal¹. He advanced with an ill-assured step. Perhaps he thought his internal consciousness that Bonthron must have been the assassin might be sufficient to implicate him in the murder, though he was not directly accessory to it. He paused before the bier, and his voice faltered, as he swore by all that was created in seven days and seven nights, by heaven, by hell, by his part of paradise, and by the God and author of all, that he was free and sackless of the bloody deed done upon the corpse before which he stood, and on whose breast he made the sign of the cross, in evidence of the appeal. No consequences ensued. The body remained stiff as before, the curdled wounds gave no sign of blood.

The citizens looked on each other with faces of blank disappointment. They had persuaded themselves of Eviot's guilt, and their suspicions had been confirmed by his irresolute manner. Their surprise at his escape was therefore extreme. The other followers of Ramorny took heart, and advanced to take the oath with a boldness which increased as one by one they performed the ordeal, and were declared, by the voice of the judges, free and innocent of every suspicion attaching to them on account of the death of Oliver Proudfoot.

But there was one individual who did not partake that increasing confidence. The name of 'Bonthron — Bonthron!' sounded three times through the aisles of the church, but he who owned it acknowledged the call no otherwise than by a sort of shuffling motion with his feet, as if he had been suddenly affected with a fit of the palsy.

'Speak, dog,' whispered Eviot, 'or prepare for a dog's death!'

But the murderer's brain was so much disturbed by the sight before him, that the judges, beholding his deportment, doubted whether to ordain him to be dragged before the bier or to pronounce judgment in default; and it was not until he

¹ See Ordeal by Fire. Note 42

was asked for the last time whether he would submit to the ordeal, that he answered, with his usual brevity —

‘I will not, what do I know what juggling tricks may be practised to take a poor man’s life? I offer the combat to any man who says I harmed that dead body’

And, according to usual form, he threw his glove upon the floor of the church.

Henry Smith stepped forward, amidst the murmured applause of his fellow citizens, which even the august presence could not entirely suppress, and, lifting the ruffian’s glove, which he placed in his bonnet, laid down his own in the usual form, as a gage of battle. But Bonthron raised it not.

‘He is no match for me,’ growled the savage, ‘nor fit to lift my glove. I follow the Prince of Scotland, in attending on his master of horse. This fellow is a wretched mechanic.’

Here the Prince interrupted him. ‘Thou follow *me*, carter! I discharge thee from my service on the spot. Take him in hand, Smith, and beat him as thou didst never thump anvil! The villain is both guilty and recreant. It sickens me even to look at him, and if my royal father will be ruled by me, he will give the parties two handsome Scottish axes, and we will see which of them turns out the best fellow before the day is half an hour older’

This was readily assented to by the Earl of Crawford and Sir Patrick Charteris, the godfathers of the parties, who, as the combatants were men of inferior rank, agreed that they should fight in steel caps, buff-jackets, and with axes, and that as soon as they could be prepared for the combat

The lists were appointed in the Skinners’ Yards¹ — a neighbouring space of ground, occupied by the corporation from which it had the name, and who quickly cleared a space of about thirty feet by twenty-five for the combatants. Thither thronged the nobles, priests, and commons — all excepting the old King, who, detesting such scenes of blood, retired to his residence, and devolved the charge of the field upon the Earl of Errol, Lord High Constable, to whose office it more particularly belonged. The Duke of Albany watched the whole proceeding with a close and wary eye. His nephew gave the scene the heedless degree of notice which corresponded with his character.

When the combatants appeared in the lists, nothing could be more striking than the contrast betwixt the manly, cheerful

¹ See Note 43

countenance of the smith, whose sparkling bright eye seemed already beaming with the victory he hoped for, and the sullen, downcast aspect of the brutal Bonthron, who looked as if he were some obscene bird, driven into sunshine out of the shelter of its darksome haunts. They made oath severally, each to the truth of his quarrel — a ceremony which Henry Gow performed with serene and manly confidence, Bonthron with a dogged resolution, which induced the Duke of Rothsay to say to the High Constable, 'Didst thou ever, my dear Errol, behold such a mixture of malignity, cruelty, and I think fear, as in that fellow's countenance?'

'He is not comely,' said the Earl, 'but a powerful knave as I have seen.'

'I'll gage a hogshead of wine with you, my good lord, that he loses the day. Henry the armourer is as strong as he, and much more active, and then look at his bold bearing! There is something in that other fellow that is loathsome to look upon. Let them yoke presently, my dear Constable, for I am sick of beholding him.'

The High Constable then addressed the widow, who, in her deep weeds, and having her children still beside her, occupied a chair within the lists — 'Woman, do you willingly accept of this man, Henry the Smith, to do battle as your champion in this cause?'

'I do — I do, most willingly,' answered Magdalen Proudfoot; 'and may the blessing of God and St John give him strength and fortune, since he strikes for the orphan and fatherless!'

'Then I pronounce this a fenced field of battle,' said the Constable aloud. 'Let no one dare, upon peril of his life, to interrupt this combat by word, speech, or look. Sound trumpets, and fight, combatants!'

The trumpets flourished, and the combatants, advancing from the opposite ends of the lists, with a steady and even pace, looked at each other attentively, well skilled in judging from the motion of the eye the direction in which a blow was meditated. They halted opposite to, and within reach of, each other, and in turn made more than one feint to strike, in order to ascertain the activity and vigilance of the opponent. At length, whether weary of these manœuvres, or fearing lest in a contest so conducted his unwieldy strength would be foiled by the activity of the smith, Bonthron heaved up his axe for a downright blow, adding the whole strength of his sturdy arms to the weight of the weapon in its descent. The smith, how-

ever, avoided the stroke by stepping aside, for it was too forcible to be controlled by any guard which he could have interposed. Ere Bonthron recovered guard, Henry struck him a sideling blow on the steel head-piece, which prostrated him on the ground.

'Confess, or die,' said the victor, placing his foot on the body of the vanquished, and holding to his throat the point of the axe, which terminated in a spike or pomard.

'I will confess,' said the villain, glaring wildly upward on the sky 'Let me rise'

'Not till you have yielded,' said Harry Smith.

'I do yield,' again murmured Bonthron, and Henry proclaimed aloud that his antagonist was defeated.

The Dukes of Rothsay and Albany, the High Constable, and the Dominican prior now entered the lists, and, addressing Bonthron, demanded if he acknowledged himself vanquished.

'I do,' answered the miscreant.

'And guilty of the murder of Oliver Proudfoot ?'

'I am, but I mistook him for another'

'And whom didst thou intend to slay ?' said the prior 'Confess, my son, and merit thy pardon in another world, for with this thou hast little more to do'

'I took the slain man,' answered the discomfited combatant, 'for him whose hand has struck me down, whose foot now presses me.'

'Blessed be the saints !' said the prior, 'now all those who doubt the virtue of the holy ordeal may have their eyes opened to their error. Lo, he is trapped in the snare which he laid for the guiltless.'

'I scarce ever saw the man before,' said the smith. 'I never did wrong to him or his. Ask him, an it please your reverence, why he should have thought of slaying me treacherously'

'It is a fitting question,' answered the prior 'Give glory where it is due, my son, even though it is manifested by thy shame. For what reason wouldst thou have waylaid this armourer, who says he never wronged thee ?'

'He had wronged him whom I served,' answered Bonthron, 'and I meditated the deed by his command'

'By whose command ?' asked the prior
Bonthron was silent for an instant, then growled out, 'He is too mighty for me to name.'

'Hearken, my son,' said the churchman, 'tarry but a brief hour, and the mighty and the mean of this earth shall to thee

alike be empty sounds The sledge is even now preparing to drag thee to the place of execution Therefore, son, once more I charge thee to consult thy soul's weal by glorifying Heaven, and speaking the truth Was it thy master, Sir John Ramorny, that stirred thee to so foul a deed ?'

'No,' answered the prostrate villain, 'it was a greater than he' And at the same time he pointed with his finger to the Prince

'Wretch !' said the astonished Duke of Rothsay, 'do you dare to hint that *I* was your instigator ?'

'You yourself, my lord,' answered the unblushing ruffian.

'Die in thy falsehood, accursed slave !' said the Prince, and, drawing his sword, he would have pierced his calumniator, had not the Lord High Constable interposed with word and action.

'Your Grace must forgive my discharging mine office. this cartiff must be delivered into the hands of the executioner He is unfit to be dealt with by any other, much less by your Highness'

'What ! noble earl,' said Albany aloud, and with much real or affected emotion, 'would you let the dog pass alive from hence, to poison the people's ears with false accusations against the Prince of Scotland ? I say, cut him to mammocks upon the spot !'

'Your Highness will pardon me,' said the Earl of Errol, 'I must protect him till his doom is executed'

'Then let him be gagged instantly,' said Albany 'And you, my royal nephew, why stand you there fixed in astonishment ? Call your resolution up — speak to the prisoner — swear — protest by all that is sacred that you knew not of this felon deed. See how the people look on each other and whisper apart ! My life on't that this lie spreads faster than any Gospel truth. Speak to them, royal kinsman, no matter what you say, so you be constant in denial.'

'What, sir,' said Rothsay, starting from his pause of surprise and mortification, and turning haughtily towards his uncle, 'would you have me gage my royal word against that of an abject recreant ? Let those who *can* believe the son of their sovereign, the descendant of Bruce, capable of laying ambush for the life of a poor mechanic enjoy the pleasure of thinking the villain's tale true'

'That will not I for one,' said the smith, bluntly 'I never did aught but what was in honour towards his royal Grace the Duke of Rothsay, and never received unkindness from him in

word, look, or deed, and I cannot think he would have given aim to such base practice.'

'Was it in honour that you threw his Highness from the ladder in Curfew Street upon Fastern's [St. Valentine's] Even?' said Bonthron, 'or think you the favour was received kindly or unkindly?'

This was so boldly said, and seemed so plausible, that it shook the smith's opinion of the Prince's innocence.

'Alas, my lord,' said he, looking sorrowfully towards Rothsay, 'could your Highness seek an innocent fellow's life for doing his duty by a helpless maiden? I would rather have died in these lists than live to hear it said of the Bruce's heir!'

'Thou art a good fellow, Smith,' said the Prince, 'but I cannot expect thee to judge more wisely than others. Away with that convict to the gallows, and gibbet him alive as you will, that he may speak falsehood and spread scandal on us to the last prolonged moment of his existence!'

So saying, the Prince turned away from the lists, disdaining to notice the gloomy looks cast towards him, as the crowd made slow and reluctant way for him to pass, and expressing neither surprise nor displeasure at a deep, hollow murmur, or groan, which accompanied his retreat. Only a few of his own immediate followers attended him from the field, though various persons of distinction had come there in his train. Even the lower class of citizens ceased to follow the unhappy Prince, whose former indifferent reputation had exposed him to so many charges of impropriety and levity, and around whom there seemed now darkening suspicions of the most atrocious nature.

He took his slow and thoughtful way to the church of the Dominicans, but the ill news, which fly proverbially fast, had reached his father's place of retirement before he himself appeared. On entering the palace and inquiring for the King, the Duke of Rothsay was surprised to be informed that he was in deep consultation with the Duke of Albany, who, mounting on horseback as the Prince left the lists, had reached the convent before him. He was about to use the privilege of his rank and birth to enter the royal apartment, when MacLewis, the commander of the guard of Brandanes, gave him to understand, in the most respectful terms, that he had special instructions which forbade his admittance.

'Go at least, MacLewis, and let them know that I wait their pleasure,' said the Prince. 'If my uncle desires to have the credit of shutting the father's apartment against the son, it will

alike be empty sounds The sledge is even now preparing to drag thee to the place of execution Therefore, son, once more I charge thee to consult thy soul's weal by glorifying Heaven, and speaking the truth Was it thy master, Sir John Ramorny, that stirred thee to so foul a deed ?'

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kinsman,' said the Duke of Albany, 'they will contaminate that of a monarch.'

'Denied, my lord!' exclaimed the Prince, 'by whom are they asserted, save by a wretch too infamous, even by his own confession, to be credited for a moment, though a beggar's character, not a prince's, were impeached? Fetch him hither, let the rack be shown to him, you will soon hear him retract the calumny which he dared to assert.'

'The gibbet has done its work too surely to leave Bonthron sensible to the rack,' said the Duke of Albany 'He has been executed an hour since.'

'And why such haste, my lord?' said the Prince, 'know you it looks as if there were practice in it to bring a stain on my name?'

'The custom is universal the defeated combatant in the ordeal of battle is instantly transferred from the lists to the gallows. And yet, fair kinsman,' continued the Duke of Albany, 'if you had boldly and strongly denied the imputation, I would have judged right to keep the wretch alive for further investigation, but as your Highness was silent, I deemed it best to stifle the scandal in the breath of him that uttered it.'

'St. Mary, my lord, but this is too insulting! Do you, my uncle and kinsman, suppose me guilty of prompting such an useless and unworthy action as that which the slave confessed?'

'It is not for me to bandy question with your Highness, otherwise I would ask whether you also mean to deny the scarce less unworthy, though less bloody, attack upon the house in Couvrefew Street? Be not angry with me, kinsman, but, indeed, your sequestering yourself for some brief space from the court, were it only during the King's residence in this city, where so much offence has been given, is imperiously demanded.'

Rothsay paused when he heard this exhortation, and, looking at the Duke in a very marked manner, replied—

'Uncle, you are a good huntsman. You have pitched your toils with much skill, but you would have been foiled, notwithstanding, had not the stag rushed among the nets of free-will. God speed you, and may you have the profit by this matter which your measures deserve. Say to my father, I obey his arrest. My Lord High Constable, I wait only your pleasure to attend you to your lodgings. Since I am to lie in ward, I could not have desired a kinder or more courteous warden.'

The interview between the uncle and nephew being thus concluded, the Prince retired with the Earl of Errol to his apartments, the citizens whom they met in the streets passing to the further side when they observed the Duke of Rothsay, to escape the necessity of saluting one whom they had been taught to consider as as ferocious as well as unprincipled libertine. The Constable's lodgings received the owner and his princely guest, both glad to leave the streets, yet neither feeling easy in the situation which they occupied with regard to each other within doors.

We must return to the lists after the combat had ceased, and when the nobles had withdrawn. The crowds were now separated into two distinct bodies. That which made the smallest in number was at the same time the most distinguished for respectability, consisting of the better class of inhabitants of Perth, who were congratulating the successful champion and each other upon the triumphant conclusion to which they had brought their feud with the courtiers. The magistrates were so much elated on the occasion, that they entreated Sir Patrick Charteris's acceptance of a collation in the town-hall. To this Henry, the hero of the day, was of course invited, or he was rather commanded to attend. He listened to the summons with great embarrassment, for it may be readily believed his heart was with Catharine Glover. But the advice of his father Simon decided him. That veteran citizen had a natural and becoming deference for the magistracy of the Fair City; he entertained a high estimation of all honours which flowed from such a source, and thought that his intended son-in-law would do wrong not to receive them with gratitude.

'Thou must not think to absent thyself from such a solemn occasion, son Henry,' was his advice. 'Sir Patrick Charteris is to be there himself, and I think it will be a rare occasion for thee to gain his good-will. It is like he may order of thee a new suit of harness, and I myself heard worthy Bailie Craigdallie say there was a talk of furbishing up the city's armoury. Thou must not neglect the good trade, now that thou takest on thee an expensive family.'

'Tush, father Glover,' answered the embarrassed victor, 'I lack no custom, and thou knowest there is Catharine, who may wonder at my absence, and have her ear abused once more by tales of glee-maidens and I wot not what.'

'Fear not for that,' said the glover, 'but go, like an obedient burgher, where thy betters desire to have thee. I do not deny

that it will cost thee some trouble to make thy peace with Catharine about this duel, for she thinks herself wiser in such matters than king and council, kirk and canons, provost and bailies. But I will take up the quarrel with her myself, and will so work for thee, that, though she may receive thee to morrow with somewhat of a chiding, it shall melt into tears and smiles, like an April morning, that begins with a mild shower. Away with thee, then, my son, and be constant to the time, to morrow morning after mass.'

The smith, though reluctantly, was obliged to defer to the reasoning of his proposed father-in-law, and, once determined to accept the honour destined for him by the fathers of the city, he extricated himself from the crowd, and hastened home to put on his best apparel, in which he presently afterwards repaired to the council-house, where the ponderous oak table seemed to bend under the massy dishes of choice 'Tay salmon and delicious sea fish from Dundee, being the dainties which the fasting season permitted, whilst neither wine, ale, nor metheglin were wanting to wash them down. The waits, or minstrels of the burgh, played during the repast, and in the intervals of the music one of them recited with great emphasis a long poetical account of the battle of Blackearn side, fought by Sir William Wallace and his redoubted captain and friend, Thomas of Longueville, against the English general Seward—a theme perfectly familiar to all the guests, who, nevertheless, more tolerant than their descendants, listened as if it had all the zest of novelty. It was complimentary to the ancestor of the Knight of Kinfauns, doubtless, and to other Perthshire families, in passages which the audience applauded vociferously, whilst they pledged each other in mighty draughts to the memory of the heroes who had fought by the side of the Champion of Scotland. The health of Henry Wynd was quaffed with repeated shouts, and the provost announced publicly, that the magistrates were consulting how they might best invest him with some distinguished privilege or honorary reward, to show how highly his fellow-citizens valued his courageous exertions.

'Nay, take it not thus, an it like your worships,' said the smith, with his usual blunt manner, 'lest men say that valour must be rare in Perth when they reward a man for fighting for the right of a forlorn widow. I am sure there are many scores of stout burghers in the town who would have done this day's dargue as well or better than I. For, in good sooth, I ought

to have cracked yonder fellow's head-piece like an earthen pipkin — ay, and would have done it, too, if it had not been one which I myself tempered for Sir John Ramorny. But, an the Fair City think my service of any worth, I will conceive it far more than acquitted by any aid which you may afford from the common good¹ to the support of the widow Magdalen and her poor orphans.

'That may well be done,' said Sir Patrick Charteris, 'and yet leave the Fair City rich enough to pay her debts to Henry Wynd, of which every man of us is a better judge than himself, who is blinded with an unavailing nicety, which men call modesty. And if the burgh be too poor for this, the provost will bear his share. The Rover's golden angels have not all taken flight yet.'

The beakers were now circulated, under the name of a cup of comfort to the widow, and anon flowed around once more to the happy memory of the murdered Oliver, now so bravely avenged. In short, it was a feast so jovial that all agreed nothing was wanting to render it perfect but the presence of the bonnet-maker himself, whose calamity had occasioned the meeting, and who had usually furnished the standing jest at such festive assemblies. Had his attendance been possible, it was drily observed by Bailie Craigdallie, he would certainly have claimed the success of the day, and vouched himself the avenger of his own murder.

At the sound of the vesper bell the company broke up, some of the graver sort going to evening prayers, where, with half-shut eyes and shining countenances, they made a most orthodox and edifying portion of a Lenten congregation, others to their own homes, to tell over the occurrences of the fight and feast, for the information of the family circle, and some, doubtless, to the licensed freedoms of some tavern, the door of which Lent did not keep so close shut as the forms of the church required. Henry returned to the wynd, warm with the good wine and the applause of his fellow-citizens, and fell asleep to dream of perfect happiness and Catharine Glover.

We have said that, when the combat was decided, the spectators were divided into two bodies. Of these, when the more respectable portion attended the victor in joyous procession, much the greater number, or what might be termed the rabble, waited upon the subdued and sentenced Bonthron, who was travelling in a different direction, and for a very opposite pur-

¹ The public property of the burgh

pose. Whatever may be thought of the comparative attractions of the house of mourning and of feasting under other circumstances, there can be little doubt which will draw most visitors, when the question is, whether we would witness miseries which we are not to share, or festivities of which we are not to partake. Accordingly, the tumbril in which the criminal was conveyed to execution was attended by far the greater proportion of the inhabitants of Perth.

A friar was seated in the same car with the murderer, to whom he did not hesitate to repeat, under the seal of confession, the same false asseveration which he had made upon the place of combat, which charged the Duke of Rothsay with being director of the ambuscade by which the unfortunate bonnet-maker had suffered. The same falsehood he disseminated among the crowd, averring, with unblushing effrontery, to those who were nearest to the car, that he owed his death to his having been willing to execute the Duke of Rothsay's pleasure. For a time he repeated these words, sullenly and doggedly, in the manner of one reciting a task, or a liar who endeavours by reiteration to obtain a credit for his words which he is internally sensible they do not deserve. But when he lifted up his eyes, and beheld in the distance the black outline of a gallows, at least forty feet high, with its ladder and its fatal cord, rising against the horizon, he became suddenly silent, and the friar could observe that he trembled very much.

'Be comforted, my son,' said the good priest, 'you have confessed the truth, and received absolution. Your penitence will be accepted according to your sincerity, and though you have been a man of bloody hands and cruel heart, yet, by the church's prayers, you shall be in due time absolved from the penal fires of purgatory.'

These assurances were calculated rather to augment than to diminish the terrors of the culprit, who was agitated by doubts whether the mode suggested for his preservation from death would to a certainty be effectual, and some suspicion whether there was really any purpose of employing them in his favour, for he knew his master well enough to be aware of the indifference with which he would sacrifice one who might on some future occasion be a dangerous evidence against him.

His doom, however, was sealed, and there was no escaping from it. They slowly approached the fatal tree, which was erected on a bank by the river's side, about half a mile from the walls of the city — a site chosen that the body of the wretch,

which was to remain food for the carrion crows, might be seen from a distance in every direction. Here the priest delivered Bonthron to the executioner, by whom he was assisted up the ladder, and to all appearance despatched according to the usual forms of the law. He seemed to struggle for life for a minute, but soon after hung still and inanimate. The executioner, after remaining upon duty for more than half an hour, as if to permit the last spark of life to be extinguished, announced to the admirers of such spectacles that the irons for the permanent suspension of the carcass not having been got ready, the concluding ceremony of disembowelling the dead body and attaching it finally to the gibbet would be deferred till the next morning at sunrise.

Notwithstanding the early hour which he had named, Master Smotherwell had a reasonable attendance of rabble at the place of execution, to see the final proceedings of justice with its victim. But great was the astonishment and resentment of these amateurs to find that the dead body had been removed from the gibbet. They were not, however, long at a loss to guess the cause of its disappearance. Bonthron had been the follower of a baron whose estates lay in Fife, and was himself a native of that province. What was more natural than that some of the Fife men, whose boats were frequently plying on the river, should have clandestinely removed the body of their countryman from the place of public shame? The crowd vented their rage against Smotherwell for not completing his job on the preceding evening, and had not he and his assistant betaken themselves to a boat, and escaped across the Tay, they would have run some risk of being pelted to death. The event, however, was too much in the spirit of the times to be much wondered at. Its real cause we shall explain in the following chapter.

CHAPTER XXIV

Let gallows gape for dogs, let men go free

Henry V

THE incidents of a narrative of this kind must be adapted to each other, as the wards of a key must tally accurately with those of the lock to which it belongs. The reader, however gentle, will not hold himself obliged to rest satisfied with the mere fact that such and such occurrences took place, which is, generally speaking, all that in ordinary life he can know of what is passing around him, but he is desirous, while reading for amusement, of knowing the interior movements occasioning the course of events. This is a legitimate and reasonable curiosity, for every man hath a right to open and examine the mechanism of his own watch, put together for his proper use, although he is not permitted to pry into the interior of the timepiece which, for general information, is displayed on the town-steeple.

It would be, therefore, uncourteous to leave my readers under any doubt concerning the agency which removed the assassin Bonthron from the gallows — an event which some of the Perth citizens ascribed to the foul fiend himself, while others were content to lay it upon the natural dislike of Bonthron's countrymen of Fife to see him hanging on the river side, as a spectacle dishonourable to their province.

About midnight succeeding the day when the execution had taken place, and while the inhabitants of Perth were deeply buried in slumber, three men muffled in their cloaks, and bearing a dark lantern, descended the alleys of a garden which led from the house occupied by Sir John Ramorny to the banks of the Tay, where a small boat lay moored to a landing-place, or little projecting pier. The wind howled in a low and melancholy manner through the leafless shrubs and bushes, and a pale moon 'waded,' as it is termed in Scotland, amongst drifting clouds, which seemed to threaten rain. The three individuals

entered the boat with great precaution to escape observation. One of them was a tall, powerful man, another short and bent downwards, the third middle-sized, and apparently younger than his companions, well made, and active. 'Thus much the imperfect light could discover' They seated themselves in the boat and unmoored it from the pier

'We must let her drift with the current till we pass the bridge, where the burghers still keep guard, and you know the proverb — "A Perth arrow hath a perfect flight,"' said the most youthful of the party, who assumed the office of helmsman, and pushed the boat off from the pier, whilst the others took the oars, which were muffled, and rowed with all precaution till they attained the middle of the river, they then ceased their efforts, lay upon their oars, and trusted to the steersman for keeping her in mid-channel.

In this manner they passed unnoticed or disregarded beneath the stately Gothic arches of the old bridge, erected by the magnificent patronage of Robert Bruce in 1329, and carried away by an inundation in 1621. Although they heard the voices of a civic watch, which, since these disturbances commenced, had been nightly maintained in that important pass, no challenge was given, and when they were so far down the stream as to be out of hearing of these guardians of the night, they began to row, but still with precaution, and to converse, though in a low tone

'You have found a new trade, comrade, since I left you,' said one of the rowers to the other. 'I left you engaged in tending a sick knight, and I find you employed in purloining a dead body from the gallows'

'A living body, so please your squirehood, Master Buncle, or else my craft hath failed of its purpose'

'So I am told, Master Potter-carrier, but, saving your clerkship, unless you tell me your trick, I will take leave to doubt of its success'

'A simple toy, Master Buncle, not likely to please a genius so acute as that of your valancie. Marry, thus it is. This suspension of the human body, which the vulgar call hanging; operates death by apoplexia — that is, the blood being unable to return to the heart by the compression of the veins, it rushes to the brain, and the man dies. Also, and as an additional cause of dissolution, the lungs no longer receive the needful supply of the vital air, owing to the ligature of the cord around the thorax, and hence the patient perishes'

'I understand that well enough. But how is such a revulsion of blood to the brain to be prevented, sir mediciner?' said the third person, who was no other than Ramorny's page, Eviot.

'Marry, then,' replied Dwining, 'hang me the patient up in such fashion that the carotid arteries shall not be compressed, and the blood will not determine to the brain, and apoplexia will not take place, and again, if there be no ligature around the thorax, the lungs will be supplied with air, whether the man be hanging in the middle heaven or standing on the firm earth.'

'All this I conceive,' said Eviot, 'but how these precautions can be reconciled with the execution of the sentence of hanging is what my dull brain cannot comprehend.'

'Ah! good youth, thy valiancie hath spoiled a fair wit. Hadst thou studied with me, thou shouldst have learned things more difficult than this. But here is my trick. I get me certain bandages, made of the same substance with your young valiancie's horse girths, having especial care that they are of a kind which will not shrink on being strained, since that would spoil my experiment. One loop of this substance is drawn under each foot, and returns up either side of the leg to a cincture, with which it is united, these cinctures are connected by divers straps down the breast and back, in order to divide the weight. And there are sundry other conveniences for easing the patient, but the chief is this the straps, or ligatures, are attached to a broad steel collar, curving outwards, and having a hook or two, for the better security of the halter, which the friendly executioner passes around that part of the machine, instead of applying it to the bare throat of the patient. Thus, when thrown off from the ladder, the sufferer will find himself suspended, not by his neck, if it please you, but by the steel circle, which supports the loops in which his feet are placed, and on which his weight really rests, diminished a little by similar supports under each arm. Thus, neither vein nor windpipe being compressed, the man will breathe as free, and his blood, saving from fright and novelty of situation, will flow as temperately as your valiancie's when you stand up in your stirrups to view a field of battle.'

'By my faith, a quaint and rare device!' quoth Buncle.

'Is it not?' pursued the leech, 'and well worth being known to such mounting spirits as your valancies, since there is no knowing to what height Sir John Ramorny's pupils may arrive,

and if these be such that it is necessary to descend from them by a rope, you may find my mode of management more convenient than the common practice. Marry, but you must be provided with a high-collared doublet, to conceal the ring of steel, and, above all, such a *bonus socius* as Smotherwell to adjust the noose'

'Base poison-vender,' said Eviot, 'men of our calling die on the field of battle'

'I will save the lesson, however,' replied Buncle, 'in case of some pinching occasion. But what a night the bloody hang-dog Bonthron must have had of it, dancing a pavise in mid-air to the music of his own shackles, as the night-wind swings him that way and this!'

'It were an alms-deed to leave him there,' said Eviot, 'for his descent from the gibbet will but encourage him to new murders. He knows but two elements—drunkenness and bloodshed.'

'Perhaps Sir John Ramorny might have been of your opinion,' said Dwining, 'but it would first have been necessary to cut out the rogue's tongue, lest he had told strange tales from his airy height. And there are other reasons that it concerns not your valancies to know. In truth, I myself have been generous in serving him, for the fellow is built as strong as Edinburgh Castle, and his anatomy would have matched any that is in the chirurgical hall of Padua. But tell me, Master Buncle, what news bring you from the doughty Douglas?'

'They may tell that know,' said Buncle. 'I am the dull ass that bears the message, and kens nought of its purport. The safer for myself, perhaps. I carried letters from the Duke of Albany and from Sir John Ramorny to the Douglas, and he looked black as a northern tempest when he opened them. I brought them answers from the Earl, at which they smiled like the sun when the harvest storm is closing over him. Go to your ephemerides, leech, and conjure the meaning out of that'

'Methinks I can do so without much cost of wit,' said the surgeon, 'but yonder I see in the pale moonlight our dead-alive. Should he have screamed out to any chance passenger, it were a curious interruption to a night-journey to be hailed from the top of such a gallows as that. Hark, methinks I do hear his groans amid the whistling of the wind and the creaking of the chains. So—fair and softly, make fast the boat with

the grappling, and get out the casket with my matters, we would be better for a little fire, but the light might bring observation on us. Come on, my men of valour, march warily, for we are bound for the gallows foot. Follow with the lantern, I trust the ladder has been left.

Sing, three merry men, and three merry men,
And three merry men are we,
Thou on the land, and I on the sand,
And Jack on the gallows-tree'

As they advanced to the gibbet, they could plainly hear groans, though uttered in a low tone. Dwining ventured to give a low cough once or twice, by way of signal, but receiving no answer, 'We had best make haste,' said he to his companions, 'for our friend must be *in extremis*, as he gives no answer to the signal which announces the arrival of help. Come, let us to the gear. I will go up the ladder first and cut the rope. Do you two follow, one after another, and take fast hold of the body, so that he fall not when the halter is unloosed. Keep sure gripe, for which the bandages will afford you convenience. Bethink you that, though he plays an owl's part to night, he hath no wings, and to fall out of a halter may be as dangerous as to fall into one.'

While he spoke thus with sneer and gibe, he ascended the ladder, and having ascertained that the men at-arms who followed him had the body in their hold, he cut the rope, and then gave his aid to support the almost lifeless form of the criminal.

By a skilful exertion of strength and address, the body of Bonthron was placed safely on the ground, and the faint yet certain existence of life having been ascertained, it was thence transported to the river-side, where, shrouded by the bank, the party might be best concealed from observation, while the leech employed himself in the necessary means of recalling animation, with which he had taken care to provide himself.

For this purpose he first freed the recovered person from his shackles, which the executioner had left unlocked on purpose, and at the same time disengaged the complicated envelopes and bandages by which he had been suspended. It was some time ere Dwining's efforts succeeded, for, in despite of the skill with which his machine had been constructed, the straps designed to support the body had stretched so considerably as to occasion the sense of suffocation becoming extremely

overpowering. But the address of the surgeon triumphed over all obstacles, and, after sneezing and stretching himself, with one or two brief convulsions, Bonthron gave decided proofs of reanimation, by arresting the hand of the operator as it was in the act of dropping strong waters on his breast and throat, and, directing the bottle which contained them to his lips, he took, almost perforce, a considerable gulp of the contents

‘It is spiritual essence double distilled,’ said the astonished operator, ‘and would blister the throat and burn the stomach of any other man. But this extraordinary beast is so unlike all other human creatures, that I should not wonder if it brought him to the complete possession of his faculties.’

Bonthron seemed to confirm this he started with a strong convulsion, sat up, stared around, and indicated some consciousness of existence

‘Wine — wine,’ were the first words which he articulated.

The leech gave him a draught of medicated wine, mixed with water. He rejected it, under the dishonourable epithet of ‘kennel-washings,’ and again uttered the words, ‘Wine — wine’

‘Nay, take it to thee, I’ the devil’s name,’ said the leech, ‘since none but he can judge of thy constitution’

A draught, long and deep enough to have discomposed the intellects of any other person, was found effectual in recalling those of Bonthron to a more perfect state, though he betrayed no recollection of where he was or what had befallen him, and in his brief and sullen manner asked why he was brought to the river-side at this time of night

‘Another frolic of the wild Prince, for drenching me as he did before. Nails and blood, but I would ——’

‘Hold thy peace,’ interrupted Eviot, ‘and be thankful, I pray you, if you have any thankfulness in you, that thy body is not crow’s meat, and thy soul in a place where water is too scarce to duck thee’

‘I begin to bethink me,’ said the ruffian, and raising the flask to his mouth, which he saluted with a long and hearty kiss, he set the empty bottle on the earth, dropped his head on his bosom, and seemed to muse for the purpose of arranging his confused recollections

‘We can abide the issue of his meditations no longer,’ said Dwining, ‘he will be better after he has slept. Up, sir! you have been riding the air these some hours, try if the water be not an easier mode of conveyance. Your valours must lend me

a hand. I can no more lift this mass than I could raise in my arms a slaughtered bull.'

'Stand upright on thine own feet, Bonthron, now we have placed thee upon them,' said Eviot.

'I cannot,' answered the patient 'Every drop of blood tingles in my veins as if it had pin-points, and my knees refuse to bear their burden. What can be the meaning of all this? This is some practice of thine, thou dog leech!'

'Ay—ay, so it is, honest Bonthron,' said Dwining—'a practice thou shalt thank me for when thou comest to learn it. In the meanwhile, stretch down in the stern of that boat, and let me wrap this cloak about thee' Assisted into the boat accordingly, Bonthron was deposited there as conveniently as things admitted of. He answered their attentions with one or two snorts resembling the grunt of a boar who has got some food particularly agreeable to him

'And now, Buncle,' said the chirurgion, 'your valiant squireship knows your charge. You are to carry this lively cargo by the river to Newburgh, where you are to dispose of him as you wot of, meantime, here are his shackles and bandages, the marks of his confinement and liberation Bind them up together, and fling them into the deepest pool you pass over, for, found in your possession, they might tell tales against us all. This low, light breath of wind from the west will permit you to use a sail as soon as the light comes in and you are tired of rowing Your other valancie, Master Page Eviot, must be content to return to Perth with me a foot, for here severs our fair company Take with thee the lantern, Buncle, for thou wilt require it more than we, and see thou send me back my flasket.'

As the pedestrians returned to Perth, Eviot expressed his belief that Bonthron's understanding would never recover the shock which terror had inflicted upon it, and which appeared to him to have disturbed all the faculties of his mind, and in particular his memory

'It is not so, an it please your pagehood,' said the leech. 'Bonthron's intellect, such as it is, hath a solid character it will but vacillate to and fro like a pendulum which hath been put in motion, and then will rest in its proper point of gravity Our memory is, of all our powers of mind, that which is peculiarly liable to be suspended. Deep intoxication or sound sleep alike destroy it, and yet it returns when the drunkard becomes sober or the sleeper is awakened. Terror sometimes

produces the same effects I knew at Paris a criminal condemned to die by the halter, who suffered the sentence accordingly, showing no particular degree of timidity upon the scaffold, and behaving and expressing himself as men in the same condition are wont to do. Accident did for him what a little ingenious practice hath done for our amiable friend from whom we but now parted. He was cut down and given to his friends before life was extinct, and I had the good fortune to restore him. But, though he recovered in other particulars, he remembered but little of his trial and sentence. Of his confession on the morning of his execution — he! he! he! (in his usual chuckling manner) — he remembered him not a word. Neither of leaving the prison, nor of his passage to the Grève, where he suffered, nor of the devout speeches with which he — he! he! he! — edified — he! he! he! — so many good Christians, nor of ascending the fatal tree, nor of taking the fatal leap, had my revenant the slightest recollection¹. But here we reach the point where we must separate, for it were unfit, should we meet any of the watch, that we be found together, and it were also prudent that we enter the city by different gates. My profession forms an excuse for my going and coming at all times. Your valiant pagehood will make such explanation as may seem sufficing.

‘I shall make my will a sufficient excuse if I am interrogated,’ said the haughty young man. ‘Yet I will avoid interruption, if possible. The moon is quite obscured, and the road as black as a wolf’s mouth.’

‘Tut,’ said the physicianer, ‘let not your valour care for that we shall tread darker paths ere it be long.’

Without inquiring into the meaning of these evil-boding sentences, and indeed hardly listening to them in the pride and recklessness of his nature, the page of Ramorny parted from his ingenious and dangerous companion, and each took his own way.

¹ See Survival after Hanging Note 45

CHAPTER XXV

The course of true love never did run smooth.

SHAKESPEARE

THE ominous anxiety of our armourer had not played him false. When the good glover parted with his intended son-in-law, after the judicial combat had been decided, he found, what he indeed had expected, that his fair daughter was in no favourable disposition towards her lover. But although he perceived that Catharine was cold, restrained, collected, had cast away the appearance of mortal passion, and listened with a reserve, implying contempt, to the most splendid description he could give her of the combat in the Skinners' Yards, he was determined not to take the least notice of her altered manner, but to speak of her marriage with his son Henry as a thing which must of course take place. At length, when she began, as on a former occasion, to intimate that her attachment to the armourer did not exceed the bounds of friendship, that she was resolved never to marry, that the pretended judicial combat was a mockery of the divine will, and of human laws, the glover not unnaturally grew angry.

'I cannot read thy thoughts, wench, nor can I pretend to guess under what wicked delusion it is that you kiss a declared lover, suffer him to kiss you, run to his house when a report is spread of his death, and fling yourself into his arms when you find him alone [alive]. All this shows very well in a girl prepared to obey her parents in a match sanctioned by her father, but such tokens of intimacy, bestowed on one whom a young woman cannot esteem, and is determined not to marry, are uncomely and unmaidenly. You have already been more bounteous of your favours to Henry Smith than your mother, whom God assoilzie, ever was to me before I married her. I tell thee, Catharine, this trifling with the love of an honest man is what I neither can, will, nor ought to endure. I have given my consent to the match, and I insist it shall take place

without delay, and that you receive Henry Wynd to-morrow, as a man whose bride you are to be with all despatch.'

'A power more potent than yours, father, will say no,' replied Catharine.

'I will risk it, my power is a lawful one, that of a father over a child, and an erring child,' answered her father 'God and man allow of my influence.'

'Then, may Heaven help us!' said Catharine, 'for, if you are obstinate in your purpose, we are all lost'

'We can expect no help from Heaven,' said the glover, 'when we act with indiscretion I am clerk enough myself to know that, and that your causeless resistance to my will is sinful, every priest will inform you. Ay, and more than that, you have spoken degradingly of the blessed appeal to God in the combat of ordeal. Take heed! for the Holy Church is awakened to watch her sheepfold, and to extirpate heresy by fire and steel, so much I warn thee of'

Catharine uttered a suppressed exclamation, and, with difficulty compelling herself to assume an appearance of composure, promised her father that, if he would spare her any farther discussion of the subject till to-morrow morning, she would then meet him, determined to make a full discovery of her sentiments

With this promise Simon Glover was obliged to remain contented, though extremely anxious for the postponed explanation. It could not be levity or fickleness of character which induced his daughter to act with so much apparent inconsistency towards the man of his choice, and whom she had so lately unequivocally owned to be also the man of her own. What external force there could exist, of a kind powerful enough to change the resolutions she had so decidedly expressed within twenty-four hours, was a matter of complete mystery

'But I will be as obstinate as she can be,' thought the glover, 'and she shall either marry Henry Smith without farther delay or old Simon Glover will know an excellent reason to the contrary'

The subject was not renewed during the evening, but early on the next morning, just at sun-rising, Catharine knelt before the bed in which her parent still slumbered. Her heart sobbed as if it would burst, and her tears fell thick upon her father's face. The good old man awoke, looked up, crossed his child's forehead, and kissed her affectionately

'I understand thee, Kate,' he said, 'thou art come to confession, and, I trust, art desirous to escape a heavy penance by being sincere.'

Catharine was silent for an instant.

'I need not ask, my father, if you remember the Carthusian monk, Clement, and his preachings and lessons, at which indeed you assisted so often, that you cannot be ignorant men called you one of his converts, and with greater justice termed me so likewise?'

'I am aware of both,' said the old man, raising himself on his elbow, 'but I defy foul fame to show that I ever owned him in any heretical proposition, though I loved to hear him talk of the corruptions of the church, the misgovernment of the nobles, and the wild ignorance of the poor, proving, as it seemed to me, that the sole virtue of our commonweal, its strength and its estimation, lay among the burgher craft of the better class, which I received as comfortable doctrine, and creditable to the town. And if he preached other than right doctrine, wherefore did his superiors in the Carthusian convent permit it? If the shepherds turn a wolf in sheep's clothing into the flock, they should not blame the sheep for being worried.'

'They endured his preaching, nay, they encouraged it,' said Catharine, 'while the vices of the laity, the contentions of the nobles, and the oppression of the poor were the subject of his censure, and they rejoiced in the crowds, who, attracted to the Carthusian church, forsook those of the other convents. But the hypocrites—for such they are—joined with the other fraternities in accusing their preacher Clement, when, passing from censuring the crimes of the state, he began to display the pride, ignorance, and luxury of the churchmen themselves, their thirst of power, their usurpation over men's consciences, and their desire to augment their worldly wealth.'

'For God's sake, Catharine,' said her father, 'speak within doors your voice rises in tone and your speech in bitterness, your eyes sparkle. It is owing to this zeal in what concerns you no more than others that malicious persons fix upon you the odious and dangerous name of a heretic.'

'You know I speak no more than what is truth,' said Catharine, 'and which you yourself have avouched often.'

'By needle and buckskin, no!' answered the glover, hastily. 'Wouldst thou have me avouch what might cost me life and limb, land and goods? For a full commission hath been

granted for taking and trying heretics, upon whom is laid the cause of all late tumults and miscarriages, wherefore, few words are best, wench. I am ever of mind with the old maker —

Since word is thrall and thought is free,
Keep well thy tongue, I counsel thee¹

‘The counsel comes too late, father,’ answered Catharine, sinking down on a chair by her father’s bedside. ‘The words have been spoken and heard, and it is indited against Simon Glover, burgess in Perth, that he hath spoken irreverent discourses of the doctrines of Holy Church.’

‘As I live by knife and needle,’ interrupted Simon, ‘it is a lie! I never was so silly as to speak of what I understood not.’

‘And hath slandered the anointed of the church, both regular and secular,’ continued Catharine.

‘Nay, I will never deny the truth,’ said the glover. ‘an idle word I may have spoken at the ale-bench, or over a pottle-pot of wine, or in right sure company, but else, my tongue is not one to run my head into peril.’

‘So you think, my dearest father, but your slightest language has been espied, your best-meaning phrases have been perverted, and you are in dittay as a gross railer against church and churchmen, and for holding discourse against them with loose and profligate persons, such as the deceased Oliver Proud-fute, the smith Henry of the Wynd, and others, set forth as commending the doctrines of Father Clement, whom they charge with seven rank heresies, and seek for with staff and spear, to try him to the death. But that,’ said Catharine, kneeling, and looking upwards with the aspect of one of those beauteous saints whom the Catholics have given to the fine arts — ‘that they shall never do. He hath escaped from the net of the fowler. and, I thank Heaven, it was by my means.’

‘Thy means, girl — art thou mad?’ said the amazed glover.

‘I will not deny what I glory in,’ answered Catharine: ‘it was by my means that Conachar was led to come hither with a party of men and carry off the old man, who is now far beyond the Highland line.’

‘O my rash — my unlucky child!’ said the glover, ‘hast thou dared to aid the escape of one accused of heresy, and to invite Highlanders in arms to interfere with the administration of justice within burgh? Alas! thou hast offended both against

¹ See Lines of Old Maker Note 46

the laws of the church and those of the realm. What — what would become of us, were this known ?

‘It is known, my dear father,’ said the maiden, firmly — ‘known even to those who will be the most willing avengers of the deed.’

‘This must be some idle notion, Catharine, or some trick of those cogging priests and nuns, it accords not with thy late cheerful willingness to wed Henry Smith.’

‘Alas ! dearest father, remember the dismal surprise occasioned by his reported death, and the joyful amazement at finding him alive, and deem it not wonder if I permitted myself, under your protection, to say more than my reflection justified. But then I knew not the worst, and thought the danger exaggerated. Alas ! I was yesterday fearfully undeceived, when the abbess herself came hither, and with her the Dominican. They showed me the commission, under the broad seal of Scotland, for inquiring into and punishing heresy, they showed me your name and my own in a list of suspected persons, and it was with tears — real tears, that the abbess conjured me to avert a dreadful fate by a speedy retreat into the cloister, and that the monk pledged his word that you should not be molested if I complied.’

‘The foul fiend take them both for weeping crocodiles !’ said the glover

‘Alas !’ replied Catharine, ‘complaint or anger will little help us, but you see I have had real cause for this present alarm.’

‘Alarm ! call it utter ruin. Alas ! my reckless child, where was your prudence when you ran headlong into such a snare ?’

‘Hear me, father,’ said Catharine, ‘there is still one mode of safety held out — it is one which I have often proposed, and for which I have in vain supplicated your permission.’

‘I understand you — the convent,’ said her father. ‘But, Catharine, what abbess or prioress would dare —’

‘That I will explain to you, father, and it will also show the circumstances which have made me seem unsteady of resolution to a degree which has brought censure upon me from yourself and others. Our confessor, old Father Francis, whom I chose from the Dominican convent at your command —’

‘Ay, truly,’ interrupted the glover, ‘and I so counselled and commanded thee, in order to take off the report that thy conscience was altogether under the direction of Father Clement.’

‘Well, this Father Francis has at different times urged and provoked me to converse on such matters as he judged I was likely to learn something of from the Carthusian preacher. Heaven forgive me my blindness! I fell into the snare, spoke freely, and, as he argued gently, as one who would fain be convinced, I even spoke warmly in defence of what I believed devoutly. The confessor assumed not his real aspect and betrayed not his secret purpose until he had learned all that I had to tell him. It was then that he threatened me with temporal punishment and with eternal condemnation. Had his threats reached me alone, I could have stood firm, for their cruelty on earth I could have endured, and their power beyond this life I have no belief in.’

‘For Heaven’s sake!’ said the glover, who was wellnigh beside himself at perceiving at every new word the increasing extremity of his daughter’s danger, ‘beware of blaspheming the Holy Church, whose arms are as prompt to strike as her ears are sharp to hear.’

‘To me,’ said the Maid of Perth, again looking up, ‘the terrors of the threatened denunciations would have been of little avail, but when they spoke of involving thee, my father, in the charge against me, I own I trembled, and desired to compromise. The Abbess Martha, of Elcho nunnery, being my mother’s kinswoman, I told her my distresses, and obtained her promise that she would receive me, if, renouncing worldly love and thoughts of wedlock, I would take the veil in her sisterhood. She had conversation on the topic, I doubt not, with the Dominican Francis, and both joined in singing the same song. “Remain in the world,” said they, “and thy father and thou shall be brought to trial as heretics, assume the veil, and the errors of both shall be forgiven and cancelled.” They spoke not even of recantation of errors of doctrine. All should be peace if I would but enter the convent.’

‘I doubt not — I doubt not,’ said Simon. ‘the old glover is thought rich, and his wealth would follow his daughter to the convent of Elcho, unless what the Dominicans might claim as their own share. So this was thy call to the veil, these thy objections to Henry Wynd?’

‘Indeed, father, the course was urged on all hands, nor did my own mind recoil from it. Sir John Ramorny threatened me with the powerful vengeance of the young Prince, if I continued to repel his wicked suit, and as for poor Henry, it is but of late that I have discovered, to my own surprise — that —

that I love his virtues more than I dislike his faults. Alas! the discovery has only been made to render my quitting the world more difficult than when I thought I had thee only to regret.'

She rested her head on her hand and wept bitterly

'All this is folly,' said the glover 'Never was there an extremity so pinching, but what a wise man might find counsel if he was daring enough to act upon it. This has never been the land or the people over whom priests could rule in the name of Rome, without their usurpation being controlled. If they are to punish each honest burgher who says the monks love gold, and that the lives of some of them cry shame upon the doctrines they teach, why, truly, Stephen Smotherwell will not lack employment, and if all foolish maidens are to be secluded from the world because they follow the erring doctrines of a popular preaching friar, they must enlarge the nunneries and receive their inmates on slighter composition. Our privileges have been often defended against the Pope himself by our good monarchs of yore, and when he pretended to interfere with the temporal government of the kingdom, there wanted not a Scottish Parliament who told him his duty in a letter that should have been written in letters of gold. I have seen the epistle myself, and though I could not read it, the very sight of the seals of the right reverend prelates and noble and true barons which hung at it made my heart leap for joy. Thou shouldst not have kept this secret, my child — but it is no time to tax thee with thy fault. Go down, get me some food. I will mount instantly, and go to our Lord Provost and have his advice, and, as I trust, his protection and that of other true-hearted Scottish nobles, who will not see a true man trodden down for an idle word.'

'Alas! my father,' said Catharine, 'it was even this impetuosity which I dreaded. I knew if I made my plaint to you there would soon be fire and feud, as if religion, though sent to us by the Father of peace, were fit only to be the mother of discord, and hence I could now — even now — give up the world, and retire with my sorrow among the sisters of Elcho, would you but let me be the sacrifice. Only, father — comfort poor Henry when we are parted for ever, and do not — do not let him think of me too harshly. Say Catharine will never vex him more by her remonstrances, but that she will never forget him in her prayers.'

'The girl hath a tongue that would make a Saracen weep,'

said her father, his own eyes sympathising with those of his daughter 'But I will not yield way to this combination between the nun and the priest to rob me of my only child. Away with you, girl, and let me don my clothes, and prepare yourself to obey me in what I may have to recommend for your safety. Get a few clothes together, and what valuables thou hast, also, take the keys of my iron box, which poor Henry Smith gave me, and divide what gold you find into two portions, put the one into a purse for thyself, and the other into the quilted girdle which I made on purpose to wear on journeys. Thus both shall be provided, in case fate should sunder us, in which event, God send the whirlwind may take the withered leaf and spare the green one! Let them make ready my horse instantly, and the white jennet that I bought for thee but a day since, hoping to see thee ride to St John's Kirk with maids and matrons, as blythe a bride as ever crossed the holy threshold. But it skills not talking. Away, and remember that the saints help those who are willing to help themselves. Not a word in answer, begone, I say — no wilfulness now. The pilot in calm weather will let a sea-boy trifle with the rudder, but, by my soul, when winds howl and waves arise, he stands by the helm himself. Away — no reply.'

Catharine left the room to execute, as well as she might, the commands of her father, who, gentle in disposition and devotedly attached to his child, suffered her often, as it seemed, to guide and rule both herself and him, yet who, as she knew, was wont to claim filial obedience and exercise parental authority with sufficient strictness when the occasion seemed to require an enforcement of domestic discipline.

While the fair Catharine was engaged in executing her father's behests, and the good old glover was hastily attiring himself, as one who was about to take a journey, a horse's tramp was heard in the narrow street. The horseman was wrapped in his riding-cloak, having the cape of it drawn up, as if to hide the under part of his face, while his bonnet was pulled over his brows, and a broad plume obscured his upper features. He sprung from the saddle, and Dorothy had scarce time to reply to his inquiries that the glover was in his bedroom, ere the stranger had ascended the stair and entered the sleeping-apartment. Simon, astonished and alarmed, and disposed to see in this early visitant an apparitor or sumner, come to attach him and his daughter, was much relieved when, as the stranger doffed the bonnet and threw the skirt of the

mantle from his face, he recognised the knightly provost of the Fair City, a visit from whom at any time was a favour of no ordinary degree, but, being made at such an hour, had something marvellous, and, connected with the circumstances of the times, even alarming

'Sir Patrick Charteris!' said the glover 'This high honour done to your poor beadsman——'

'Hush!' said the knight, 'there is no time for idle civilities. I came hither because a man is, in trying occasions, his own safest page, and I can remain no longer than to bid thee fly, good glover, since warrants are to be granted this day in council for the arrest of thy daughter and thee, under charge of heresy, and delay will cost you both your liberty for certain, and perhaps your lives'

'I have heard something of such a matter,' said the glover, 'and was this instant setting forth to Kinfauns to plead my innocence of this scandalous charge, to ask your lordship's counsel, and to implore your protection.'

'Thy innocence, friend Simon, will avail thee but little before prejudiced judges, my advice is, in one word, to fly, and wait for happier times. As for my protection, we must tarry till the tide turns ere it will in any sort avail thee. But if thou canst lie concealed for a few days or weeks, I have little doubt that the churchmen, who, by siding with the Duke of Albany in court intrigue, and by alleging the decay of the purity of Catholic doctrine as the sole cause of the present national misfortunes, have, at least for the present hour, an irresistible authority over the King, will receive a check. In the meanwhile, however, know that King Robert hath not only given way to this general warrant for inquisition after heresy, but hath confirmed the Pope's nomination of Henry Wardlaw to be Archbishop of St. Andrews and Primate of Scotland,¹ thus yielding to Rome those freedoms and immunities of the Scottish Church which his ancestors, from the time of Malcolm Canmore, have so boldly defended. His brave fathers would have rather subscribed a covenant with the devil than yielded in such a matter to the pretensions of Rome.'

'Alas, and what remedy?'

'None, old man, save in some sudden court change,' said Sir Patrick. 'The King is but like a mirror, which, having no light itself, reflects back with equal readiness any which is

¹ See Henry Wardlaw Note 47

placed near to it for the time. Now, although the Douglas is banded with Albany, yet the Earl is unfavourable to the high claims of those domineering priests, having quarrelled with them about the exactions which his retinue hath raised on the Abbot of Arbroath. He will come back again with a high hand, for report says the Earl of March hath fled before him. When he returns we shall have a changed world, for his presence will control Albany, especially as many nobles, and I myself, as I tell you in confidence, are resolved to league with him to defend the general right. 'Thy exile, therefore, will end with his return to our court. Thou hast but to seek thee some temporary hiding-place.'

'For that, my lord,' said the glover, 'I can be at no loss, since I have just title to the protection of the high Highland chief, Gilchrist MacIain, chief of the Clan Quhele.'

'Nay, if thou canst take hold of his mantle thou needs no help of any one else. neither Lowland churchman nor layman finds a free course of justice beyond the Highland frontier.'

'But then my child, noble sir—my Catharine?' said the glover.

'Let her go with thee, man. The graddan cake will keep her white teeth in order, the goat's whey will make the blood spring to her cheek again, which these alarms have banished, and even the Fair Maiden of Perth may sleep soft enough on a bed of Highland breckan.'

'It is not from such idle respects, my lord, that I hesitate,' said the glover. 'Catharine is the daughter of a plain burgher, and knows not nicety of food or lodging. But the son of MacIain hath been for many years a guest in my house, and I am obliged to say that I have observed him looking at my daughter, who is as good as a betrothed bride, in a manner that, though I cared not for it in this lodging in Curfew Street, would give me some fear of consequences in a Highland glen, where I have no friend and Conachar many.'

The knightly provost replied by a long whistle. 'Whew! whew! Nay, in that case, I advise thee to send her to the nunnery at Elcho, where the abbess, if I forget not, is some relation of yours. Indeed, she said so herself, adding, that she loved her kinswoman well, together with all that belongs to thee, Simon.'

'Truly, my lord, I do believe that the abbess hath so much regard for me, that she would willingly receive the trust of my daughter, and my whole goods and gear, into her sisterhood.'

Marry, her affection is something of a tenacious character, and would be loth to unloose its hold, either upon the wench or her tocher'

'Whew — whew !' again whistled the Knight of Kinfauns, 'by the Thane's Cross, man, but this is an ill favoured pirl to wind. Yet it shall never be said the fairest maid in the Fair City was cooped up in a convent, like a kaim hen in a cavey, and she about to be married to the bold burgess Henry Wynd. That tale shall not be told while I wear belt and spurs, and am called Provost of Perth.'

'But what remede, my lord ?' asked the glover

'We must all take our share of the risk. Come, get you and your daughter presently to horse. You shall ride with me, and we'll see who dare gloom at you. The summons is not yet served on thee, and if they send an apparitor to Kinfauns without a warrant under the King's own hand, I make mine avow, by the Red Rover's soul ! that he shall eat his writ, both wax and wether skin. To horse — to horse' and, addressing Catharine, as she entered at the moment, 'you too, my pretty maid,

To horse, and fear not for your quarters,
They thrive in law that trust in Charters.'

In a minute or two the father and daughter were on horseback, both keeping an arrow's flight before the provost, by his direction, that they might not seem to be of the same company. They passed the eastern gate in some haste, and rode forward roundly until they were out of sight. Sir Patrick followed leisurely, but, when he was lost to the view of the warders, he spurred his mettled horse, and soon came up with the glover and Catharine, when a conversation ensued which throws light upon some previous passages of this history

CHAPTER XXVI

Hail, land of bowman ' seed of those who scorn'd
To stoop the neck to wide imperial Rome —
O dearest half of Albion sea-walled !

Albanna (1737).

‘ I HAVE been devising a mode,’ said the well-meaning provost, ‘ by which I may make you both secure for a week or two from the malice of your enemies, when I have little doubt I may see a changed world at court But that I may the better judge what is to be done, tell me frankly, Simon, the nature of your connexion with Gilchrist MacIlan, which leads you to repose such implicit confidence in him You are a close observer of the rules of the city, and are aware of the severe penalties which they denounce against such burghers as have covine and alliance with the Highland clans ’

‘ True, my lord, but it is also known to you that our craft, working in skins of cattle, stags, and every other description of hides, have a privilege, and are allowed to transact with those Highlanders, as with the men who can most readily supply us with the means of conducting our trade, to the great profit of the burgh Thus it hath chanced with me to have great dealings with these men, and I can take it on my salvation, that you nowhere find more just and honourable traffickers, or by whom a man may more easily make an honest penny I have made in my day several distant journeys into the far Highlands, upon the faith of their chiefs, nor did I ever meet with a people more true to their word, when you can once prevail upon them to plight it in your behalf And as for the Highland chief, Gilchrist MacIlan, saying that he is hasty in homicide and fire-raising towards those with whom he hath deadly feud, I have nowhere seen a man who walketh a more just and upright path ’

‘ It is more than ever I heard before,’ said Sir Patrick Charteris ‘ Yet I have known something of the Highland runagates too ’

'They show another favour, and a very different one, to their friends than to their enemies, as your lordship shall understand,' said the glover 'However, be that as it may, it chanced me to serve Gilchrist MacIlan in a high matter. It is now about eighteen years since, that it chanced, the Clan Quhele and Clan Chattan being at feud, as indeed they are seldom at peace, the former sustained such a defeat as well-nigh extirpated the family of their chief, MacIlan. Seven of his sons were slain in battle and after it, himself put to flight, and his castle taken and given to the flames. His wife, then near the time of giving birth to an infant, fled into the forest, attended by one faithful servant and his daughter. Here, in sorrow and care enough, she gave birth to a boy, and as the misery of the mother's condition rendered her little able to suckle the infant, he was nursed with the milk of a doe, which the forester who attended her contrived to take alive in a snare. It was not many months afterwards that, in a second encounter of these fierce clans, MacIlan defeated his enemies in his turn, and regained possession of the district which he had lost. It was with unexpected rapture that he found his wife and child were in existence, having never expected to see more of them than the bleached bones, from which the wolves and wildcats had eaten the flesh.

'But a strong and prevailing prejudice, such as is often entertained by these wild people, prevented their chief from enjoying the full happiness arising from having thus regained his only son in safety. An ancient prophecy was current among them, that the power of the tribe should fall by means of a boy born under a bush of holly and suckled by a white doe. The circumstance, unfortunately for the chief, tallied exactly with the birth of the only child which remained to him, and it was demanded of him by the elders of the clan, that the boy should be either put to death or at least removed from the dominions of the tribe and brought up in obscurity. Gilchrist MacIlan was obliged to consent, and having made choice of the latter proposal, the child, under the name of Conachar, was brought up in my family, with the purpose, as was at first intended, of concealing from him all knowledge who or what he was, or of his pretensions to authority over a numerous and warlike people. But, as years rolled on, the elders of the tribe, who had exerted so much authority, were removed by death, or rendered incapable of interfering in the public affairs by age, while, on the other hand, the influence

of Gilchrist MacIlan was increased by his successful struggles against the Clan Chattan, in which he restored the equality betwixt the two contending confederacies, which had existed before the calamitous defeat of which I told your honour. Feeling himself thus firmly seated, he naturally became desirous to bring home his only son to his bosom and family, and for that purpose caused me to send the young Conachar, as he was called, more than once to the Highlands. He was a youth expressly made, by his form and gallantry of bearing, to gain a father's heart. At length, I suppose the lad either guessed the secret of his birth or something of it was communicated to him, and the disgust which the paughty Hieland varlet had always shown for my honest trade became more manifest, so that I dared not so much as lay my staff over his costard, for fear of receiving a stab with a dirk, as an answer in Gaelic to a Saxon remark. It was then that I wished to be well rid of him, the rather that he showed so much devotion to Catharine, who, forsooth, set herself up to wash the Ethiopian, and teach a wild Hielandman mercy and morals. She knows herself how it ended.'

'Nay, my father,' said Catharine, 'it was surely but a point of charity to snatch the brand from the burning.'

'But a small point of wisdom,' said her father, 'to risk the burning of your own fingers for such an end. What says my lord to the matter?'

'My lord would not offend the Fair Maid of Perth,' said Sir Patrick, 'and he knows well the purity and truth of her mind. And yet I must needs say that, had this nursling of the doe been shrivelled, haggard, cross-made, and red-haired, like some Highlanders I have known, I question if the Fair Maiden of Perth would have bestowed so much zeal upon his conversion, and if Catharine had been as aged, wrinkled, and bent by years as the old woman that opened the door to me this morning, I would wager my gold spurs against a pair of Highland brogues that this wild roebuck would never have listened to a second lecture. You laugh, glover, and Catharine blushes a blush of anger. Let it pass, it is the way of the world.'

'The way in which the men of the world esteem their neighbours, my lord,' answered Catharine, with some spirit.

'Nay, fair saint, forgive a jest,' said the knight, 'and thou, Simon, tell us how this tale ended — with Conachar's escape to the Highlands, I suppose?'

'With his return thither,' said the glover. 'There was, for

some two or three years, a fellow about Perth, a sort of messenger, who came and went under divers pretences, but was, in fact, the means of communication between Gilchrist MacIan and his son, young Conachar, or, as he is now called, Hector. From this gillie I learned, in general, that the banishment of the *dault an neigh dheil*, or foster-child of the white doe, was again brought under consideration of the tribe. His foster-father, Torquil of the Oak, the old forester, appeared with eight sons, the finest men of the clan, and demanded that the doom of banishment should be revoked. He spoke with the greater authority, as he was himself *taishatar*, or a seer, and supposed to have communication with the invisible world. He affirmed that he had performed a magical ceremony, termed *tine-egan*,¹ by which he evoked a fiend, from whom he extorted a confession that Conachar, now called Eachin, or Hector, MacIan, was the only man in the approaching combat between the two hostile clans who should come off without blood or blemish. Hence Torquil of the Oak argued that the presence of the fated person was necessary to ensure the victory. "So much I am possessed of this," said the forester, "that, unless Eachin fight in his place in the ranks of the Clan Quhele, neither I, his foster-father, nor any of my eight sons will lift a weapon in the quarrel."

This speech was received with much alarm, for the defection of nine men, the stoutest of their tribe, would be a serious blow, more especially if the combat, as begins to be rumoured, should be decided by a small number from each side. The ancient superstition concerning the foster son of the white doe was counterbalanced by a new and later prejudice, and the father took the opportunity of presenting to the clan his long hidden son, whose youthful, but handsome and animated, countenance, haughty carriage, and active limbs excited the admiration of the clansmen, who joyfully received him as the heir and descendant of their chief, notwithstanding the ominous presage attending his birth and nurture.

'From this tale, my lord,' continued Simon Glover, 'your lordship may easily conceive why I myself should be secure of a good reception among the Clan Quhele, and you may also have reason to judge that it would be very rash in me to carry Catharine thither. And this, noble lord, is the heaviest of my troubles.'

'We shall lighten the load, then,' said Sir Patrick, 'and,

¹ See Note 48

good glover, I will take risk for thee and this damsel My alliance with the Douglas gives me some interest with Marjory, Duchess of Rothsay, his daughter, the neglected wife of our wilful Prince Rely on it, good glover, that in her retinue thy daughter will be as secure as in a fenced castle The Duchess keeps house now at Falkland, a castle which the Duke of Albany, to whom it belongs, has lent to her for her accommodation I cannot promise you pleasure, Fair Maiden, for the Duchess Marjory of Rothsay is unfortunate, and therefore splenetic, haughty, and overbearing, conscious of the want of attractive qualities, therefore jealous of those women who possess them But she is firm in faith and noble in spirit, and would fling Pope or prelate into the ditch of her castle who should come to arrest any one under her protection You will therefore have absolute safety, though you may lack comfort'

'I have no title to more,' said Catharine, 'and deeply do I feel the kindness that is willing to secure me such honourable protection If she be haughty, I will remember she is a Douglas, and hath right, as being such, to entertain as much pride as may become a mortal, if she be fretful, I will recollect that she is unfortunate, and if she be unreasonably captious, I will not forget that she is my protectress Heed no longer for me, my lord, when you have placed me under the noble lady's charge But my poor father, to be exposed amongst these wild and dangerous people!'

'Think not of that, Catharine,' said the glover 'I am as familiar with brogues and bracken as if I had worn them myself I have only to fear that the decisive battle may be fought before I can leave this country, and if the Clan Quhele lose the combat, I may suffer by the ruin of my protectors'

'We must have that cared for,' said Sir Patrick 'rely on my looking out for your safety But which party will carry the day, think you?'

'Frankly, my Lord Provost, I believe the Clan Chattan will have the worse these nine children of the forest form a third nearly of the band surrounding the chief of Clan Quhele, and are redoubted champions'

'And your apprentice, will he stand to it, thinkest thou?'

'He is hot as fire, Sir Patrick,' answered the glover, 'but he is also unstable as water Nevertheless, if he is spared, he seems likely to be one day a brave man'

'But, as now, he has some of the white doe's milk still lurking about his liver, ha, Simon?'

'He has little experience, my lord,' said the glover, 'and I need not tell an honoured warrior like yourself that danger must be familiar to us ere we can dally with it like a mistress'

This conversation brought them speedily to the Castle of Kinfauns, where, after a short refreshment, it was necessary that the father and the daughter should part, in order to seek their respective places of refuge. It was then first, as she saw that her father's anxiety on her account had drowned all recollections of his friend, that Catharine dropped, as if in a dream, the name of 'Henry Gow'

'True — most true,' continued her father, 'we must possess him of our purposes'

'Leave that to me,' said Sir Patrick. 'I will not trust to a messenger, nor will I send a letter, because, if I could write one, I think he could not read it. He will suffer anxiety in the meanwhile, but I will ride to Perth to morrow by times and acquaint him with your designs.'

The time of separation now approached. It was a bitter moment, but the manly character of the old burgher, and the devout resignation of Catharine to the will of Providence, made it lighter than might have been expected. The good knight hurried the departure of the burgess, but in the kindest manner, and even went so far as to offer him some gold pieces in loan, which might, where specie was so scarce, be considered as the *ne plus ultra* of regard. The glover, however, assured him he was amply provided, and departed on his journey in a north-westerly direction. The hospitable protection of Sir Patrick Charteris was no less manifested towards his fair guest. She was placed under the charge of a duenna who managed the good knight's household, and was compelled to remain several days in Kinfauns, owing to the obstacles and delays interposed by a Tay boatman, named Kitt Henshaw, to whose charge she was to be committed, and whom the provost highly trusted.

Thus were severed the child and parent in a moment of great danger and difficulty, much augmented by circumstances of which they were then ignorant, and which seemed greatly to diminish any chance of safety that remained for them

CHAPTER XXVII

‘This Austin humbly did ’ ‘Did he ?’ quoth he.

‘Austin may do the same again for me ’

POPE'S *Prologue to Canterbury Tales from Chaucer*

THE course of our story will be best pursued by attending that of Simon Glover. It is not our purpose to indicate the exact local boundaries of the two contending clans, especially since they are not clearly pointed out by the historians who have transmitted accounts of this memorable feud. It is sufficient to say, that the territory of the Clan Chattan extended far and wide, comprehending Caithness and Sutherland, and having for their paramount chief the powerful earl of the latter shire, thence called *Mohr ar Chat*¹. In this general sense, the Keiths, the Sinclairs, the Guns, and other families and clans of great power, were included in the confederacy. These, however, were not engaged in the present quarrel, which was limited to that part of the Clan Chattan occupying the extensive mountainous districts of Perthshire and Inverness-shire, which form a large portion of what is called the north-eastern Highlands. It is well known that two large septs, unquestionably known to belong to the Clan Chattan, the MacPhersons and the MacIntoshes, dispute to this day which of their chieftains was at the head of this Badenoch branch of the great confederacy, and both have of later times assumed the title of Captain of Clan Chattan. *Non nostrum est*. But, at all events, Badenoch must have been the centre of the confederacy, so far as involved in the feud of which we treat.

Of the rival league of Clan Quhele we have a still less distinct account, for reasons which will appear in the sequel. Some authors have identified them with the numerous and powerful sept of MacKay. If this is done on good authority, which is to be doubted, the MacKays must have shifted their settlements greatly since the reign of Robert III., since they

¹ See Note 49

are now to be found (as a clan) in the extreme northern parts of Scotland, in the counties of Ross and Sutherland.¹ We cannot, therefore, be so clear as we would wish in the geography of the story. Suffice it that, directing his course in a north westerly direction, the glover travelled for a day's journey in the direction of the Breadalbane country, from which he hoped to reach the castle where Gilchrist MacIain, the captain of the Clan Quhele, and the father of his pupil Conachar, usually held his residence, with a barbarous pomp of attendance and ceremonial suited to his lofty pretensions.

We need not stop to describe the toil and terrors of such a journey, where the path was to be traced among wastes and mountains, now ascending precipitous ravines, now plunging into inextricable bogs, and often intersected with large brooks, and even rivers. But all these perils Simon Glover had before encountered in quest of honest gain, and it was not to be supposed that he shunned or feared them where liberty, and life itself, were at stake.

The danger from the warlike and uncivilised inhabitants of these wilds would have appeared to another at least as formidable as the perils of the journey. But Simon's knowledge of the manners and language of the people assured him on this point also. An appeal to the hospitality of the wildest Gael was never unsuccessful, and the kerne, that in other circumstances would have taken a man's life for the silver button of his cloak, would deprive himself of a meal to relieve the traveller who implored hospitality at the door of his bothy. The art of travelling in the Highlands was to appear as confident and defenceless as possible, and accordingly the glover carried no arms whatever, journeyed without the least appearance of precaution, and took good care to exhibit nothing which might excite cupidity. Another rule which he deemed it prudent to observe was to avoid communication with any of the passengers whom he might chance to meet, except in the interchange of the common civilities of salutation, which the Highlanders rarely omit. Few opportunities occurred of exchanging even such passing greetings. The country, always lonely, seemed now entirely forsaken, and, even in the little straths or valleys which he had occasion to pass or traverse, the hamlets were deserted, and the inhabitants had betaken themselves to woods and caves. This was easily accounted for, considering the imminent dangers of a feud which all expected would become

¹ See MacKays Country Note 50

one of the most general signals for plunder and ravage that had ever distracted that unhappy country.

Simon began to be alarmed at this state of de-olation. He had made a halt since he left Kintaura, to allow his nag some rest, and now he began to be anxious how he was to pass the night. He had reckoned upon spending it at the cottage of an old acquaintance, called Niel Booshalloch (or the cow-herd), because he had charge of numerous herds of cattle belonging to the captain of Clan Quhele, for which purpose he had a settlement on the banks of the Tay, not far from the spot where it leaves the lake of the same name. From this his old host and friend, with whom he had transacted many bargains for hides and furs, the old glover hoped to learn the present state of the country, the prospect of peace or war, and the best measures to be taken for his own safety. It will be remembered that the news of the indentures of battle entered into for diminishing the extent of the feud had only been communicated to King Robert the day before the glover left Perth, and did not become public till some time afterwards.

'If Niel Booshalloch hath left his dwelling like the rest of them, I shall be finely helped up,' thought Simon, 'since I want not only the advantage of his good advice, but also his interest with Gilchrist MacIan, and, moreover, a night's quarters and a supper.'

Thus reflecting, he reached the top of a swelling green hill, and saw the splendid vision of Loch Tay lying beneath him — an immense plate of polished silver, its dark heathy mountains and leafless thickets of oak serving as an arabesque frame to a magnificent mirror.

Indifferent to natural beauty at any time, Simon Glover was now particularly so, and the only part of the splendid landscape on which he turned his eye was the angle or loop of meadow land where the river Tay, rushing in full-sworn dignity from its parent lake, and wheeling around a beautiful valley of about a mile in breadth, begins his broad course to the south-eastward, like a conqueror and a legislator, to subdue and to enrich remote districts. Upon the sequestered spot, which is so beautifully situated between lake, mountain, and river, arose afterwards the feudal castle of the Ballough,¹ which in our time has been succeeded by the splendid palace of the Earls of Breadalbane.

But the Campbells, though they had already attained very great power in Argyleshire, had not yet extended themselves

¹ Balloch is Gaelic for the discharge of a lake into a river.

so far eastward as Loch Tay, the banks of which were, either by right or by mere occupancy, possessed for the present by the Clan Quhele, whose choicest herds were fattened on the margin of the lake. In this valley, therefore, between the river and the lake, amid extensive forests of oak-wood, hazel, rowan tree, and larches, arose the humble cottage of Niel Booshalloch, a village Eumæus, whose hospitable chimneys were seen to smoke plentifully, to the great encouragement of Simon Glover, who might otherwise have been obliged to spend the night in the open air, to his no small discomfort.

He reached the door of the cottage, whistled, shouted, and made his approach known. There was a baying of hounds and colles, and presently the master of the hut came forth. There was much care on his brow, and he seemed surprised at the sight of Simon Glover, though the herdsman covered both as well as he might, for nothing in that region could be reckoned more uncivil than for the landlord to suffer anything to escape him in look or gesture which might induce the visitor to think that his arrival was an displeasing, or even an unexpected, incident. The traveller's horse was conducted to a stable, which was almost too low to receive him, and the glover himself was led into the mansion of the Booshalloch, where, according to the custom of the country, bread and cheese was placed before the wayfarer, while more solid food was preparing. Simon, who understood all their habits, took no notice of the obvious marks of sadness on the brow of his entertainer and on those of the family, until he had eaten somewhat for form's sake, after which he asked the general question, 'Was there any news in the country?'

'Bad news as ever were told,' said the herdsman 'our father is no more.'

'How!' said Simon, greatly alarmed, 'is the captain of the Clan Quhele dead?'

'The captain of the Clan Quhele never dies,' answered the Booshalloch, 'but Gilchrist MacIvan died twenty hours since, and his son, Eachin MacIvan, is now captain.'

'What, Eachin — that is Conachar — my apprentice?'

'As little of that subject as you list, brother Simon,' said the herdsman. 'It is to be remembered, friend, that your craft, which doth very well for a living in the douce city of Perth, is something too mechanical to be much esteemed at the foot of Ben Lawers and on the banks of Loch Tay. We have not a Gaelic word by which we can even name a maker of gloves.'

'It would be strange if you had, friend Niel,' said Simon, duly, 'having so few gloves to wear I think there be none in the whole Clan Quhele, save those which I myself gave to Gilchrist MacIain, whom God assouline, who esteemed them a choice propine. Most deeply do I regret his death, for I was coming to him on express business.'

'You had better turn the nag's head southward with morning light,' said the herdsman. 'The funeral is instantly to take place, and it must be with short ceremony, for there is a battle to be fought by the Clan Quhele and the Clan Chattan, thirty champions on a side, as soon as Palm Sunday next, and we have brief time either to lament the dead or honour the living.'

'Yet are my affairs so pressing, that I must needs see the young chief, were it but for a quarter of an hour,' said the glover.

'Hark thee, friend,' replied his host, 'I think thy business must be either to gather money or to make traffic. Now, if the chief owe thee anything for upbringing or otherwise, ask him not to pay it when all the treasures of the tribe are called in for making gallant preparation of arms and equipment for their combatants, that we may meet these proud hill-cats in a fashion to show ourselves then superiors. But if thou comest to practise commerce with us, thy time is still worse chosen. Thou knowest that thou art already envied of many of our tribe, for having had the fosterage of the young chief, which is a thing usually given to the best of the clan.'

'But, St Mary, man!' exclaimed the glover, 'men should remember the office was not conferred on me as a favour which I courted, but that it was accepted by me on importunity and entreaty, to my no small prejudice. This Conachar, or Hector, of yours, or whatever you call him, has destroyed me doe-skins to the amount of many pounds Scots.'

'There again, now,' said the Booshalloch, 'you have spoken a word to cost your life. Any allusion to skins or hides, or especially to deer and does, may incur no less a forfeit. The chief is young, and jealous of his rank, none knows the reason better than thou, friend Glover. He will naturally wish that everything concerning the opposition to his succession, and having reference to his exile, should be totally forgotten, and he will not hold him in affection who shall recall the recollection of his people, or force back his own, upon what they must both remember with pain. Think how, at such a moment, they will look on

the old glover of Perth, to whom the chief was so long apprentice! Come — come, old friend, you have erred in this. You are in over great haste to worship the rising sun, while his beams are yet level with the horizon. Come thou when he has climbed higher in the heavens, and thou shalt have thy share of the warmth of his noonday height.

‘Niel Booshalloch,’ said the glover, ‘we have been old friends, as thou say’st, and as I think thee a true one, I will speak to thee freely, though what I say might be perilous if spoken to others of thy clan. Thou think’st I come hither to make my own profit of thy young chief, and it is natural thou shouldst think so. But I would not, at my years, quit my own chimney corner in Curfew Street to bask me in the beams of the brightest sun that ever shone upon Highland heather. The very truth is, I come hither in extremity — my foes have the advantage of me, and have laid things to my charge whereof I am incapable, even in thought. Nevertheless, doom is like to go forth against me, and there is no remedy but that I must up and fly, or remain and perish. I come to your young chief, as one who had refuge with me in his distress — who ate of my bread and drank of my cup. I ask of him refuge, which, as I trust, I shall need but a short time.’

‘That makes a different case,’ replied the herdsman. ‘So different, that, if you came at midnight to the gate of Maclean, having the King of Scotland’s head in your hand, and a thousand men in pursuit for the avenging of his blood, I could not think it for his honour to refuse you protection. And for your innocence or guilt, it concerns not the case, or rather, he ought the more to shelter you if guilty, seeing your necessity and his risk are both in that case the greater. I must straightway to him, that no hasty tongue tell him of your arriving hither without saying the cause.’

‘A pity of your trouble,’ said the glover, ‘but where lies the chief?’

‘He is quartered about ten miles hence, busied with the affairs of the funeral, and with preparations for the combat — the dead to the grave and the living to battle.’

‘It is a long way, and will take you all night to go and come,’ said the glover, ‘and I am very sure that Conachar, when he knows it is I who —’

‘Forget Conachar,’ said the herdsman, placing his finger on his lips. ‘And as for the ten miles, they are but a Highland leap, when one bears a message between his friend and his chief.’

So saying, and committing the traveller to the charge of his eldest son and his daughter, the active herdsman left his house two hours before midnight, to which he returned long before sunrise. He did not disturb his wearied guest, but when the old man had arisen in the morning he acquainted him that the funeral of the late chieftain was to take place the same day, and that, although Eachin MacLan could not invite a Saxon to the funeral, he would be glad to receive him at the entertainment which was to follow.

‘His will must be obeyed,’ said the glover, half-smiling at the change of relation between himself and his late apprentice. ‘The man is the master now, and I trust he will remember that, when matters were otherwise between us, I did not use my authority ungraciously.’

‘Troutsho, friend!’ exclaimed the Booshalloch, ‘the less of that you say the better. You will find yourself a right welcome guest to Eachin, and the deil a man dares stir you within his bounds. But fare you well, for I must go, as beseems me, to the burial of the best chief the clan ever had, and the wisest captain that ever cocked the sweet-gale (bog-myrtle) in his bonnet. Farewell to you for a while, and if you will go to the top of the Tom-an-Lonach behind the house, you will see a gallant sight, and hear such a coronach as will reach the top of Ben Lawers. A boat will wait for you, three hours hence, at a wee bit creek about half a mile westward from the head of the Tay.’

With these words he took his departure, followed by his three sons, to man the boat in which he was to join the rest of the mourners, and two daughters, whose voices were wanted to join in the lament, which was chanted, or rather screamed, on such occasions of general affliction.

Simon Glover, finding himself alone, resorted to the stable to look after his nag, which, he found, had been well served with graddan, or bread made of scorched barley. Of this kindness he was fully sensible, knowing that, probably, the family had little of this delicacy left to themselves until the next harvest should bring them a scanty supply. In animal food they were well provided, and the lake found them abundance of fish for their lenten diet, which they did not observe very strictly, but bread was a delicacy very scanty in the Highlands. The bogs afforded a soft species of hay, none of the best to be sure, but Scottish horses, like their riders, were then accustomed to hard fare. Gauntlet, for this was the

name of the palfrey, had his stall crammed full of dried fern for litter, and was otherwise as well provided for as Highland hospitality could contrive.

Simon Glover being thus left to his own painful reflections, nothing better remained, after having seen after the comforts of the dumb companion of his journey, than to follow the herdsman's advice, and ascending towards the top of an eminence called Tom-an-Lonach, or the Knoll of Yew Trees, after a walk of half an hour he reached the summit, and could look down on the broad expanse of the lake, of which the height commanded a noble view. A few aged and scattered yew-trees of great size still vindicated for the beautiful green hill the name attached to it. But a far greater number had fallen a sacrifice to the general demand for bow-staves in that warlike age, the bow being a weapon much used by the mountaineers, though those which they employed, as well as their arrows, were, in shape and form, and especially in efficacy, far inferior to the archery of merry England. The dark and shattered individual yews which remained were like the veterans of a broken host, occupying in disorder some post of advantage, with the stern purpose of resisting to the last. Behind this eminence, but detached from it, arose a higher hill, partly covered with copsewood, partly opening into glades of pasture, where the cattle strayed, finding, at this season of the year, a scanty sustenance among the spring-heads and marshy places, where the fresh grass began first to arise.

The opposite or northern shore of the lake presented a far more Alpine prospect than that upon which the glover was stationed. Woods and thickets ran up the sides of the mountains, and disappeared among the sinuosities formed by the winding ravines which separated them from each other, but far above these specimens of a tolerable natural soil arose the swart and bare mountains themselves, in the dark grey desolation proper to the season.

Some were peaked, some broad crested, some rocky and precipitous, others of a tamer outline, and the clan of Titans seemed to be commanded by their appropriate chieftains—the frowning mountain of Ben Lawers, and the still more lofty eminence of Ben Mohr, arising high above the rest, whose peaks retain a dazzling helmet of snow far into the summer season, and sometimes during the whole year. Yet the borders of this wild and silvan region, where the mountains descended upon the lake, intimated, even at that early period, many traces

of human habitation. Hamlets were seen, especially on the northern margin of the lake, half hid among the little glens that poured their tributary streams into Loch Tay, which, like many earthly things, made a fair show at a distance, but, when more closely approached, were disgustful and repulsive, from their squalid want of the conveniences which attend even Indian wigwams. They were inhabited by a race who neither cultivated the earth nor cared for the enjoyments which industry procures. The women, although otherwise treated with affection, and even delicacy of respect, discharged all the absolutely necessary domestic labour. The men, excepting some reluctant use of an ill-formed plough, or more frequently a spade, grudgingly gone through, as a task infinitely beneath them, took no other employment than the charge of the herds of black cattle, in which their wealth consisted. At all other times they hunted, fished, or marauded, during the brief intervals of peace, by way of pastime, plundering with bolder license, and fighting with embittered animosity, in time of war, which, public or private, upon a broader or more restricted scale, formed the proper business of their lives, and the only one which they esteemed worthy of them.

The magnificent bosom of the lake itself was a scene to gaze on with delight. Its noble breadth, with its termination in a full and beautiful run, was rendered yet more picturesque by one of those islets which are often happily situated in the Scottish lakes¹. The ruins upon that isle, now almost shapeless, being overgrown with wood, rose, at the time we speak of, into the towers and pinnacles of a priory, where slumbered the remains of Sibylla, daughter of Henry I of England, and consort of Alexander the First of Scotland. This holy place had been deemed of dignity sufficient to be the deposit of the remains of the captain of the Clan Quhele, at least till times when the removal of the danger, now so imminently pressing, should permit of his body being conveyed to a distinguished convent in the north, where he was destined ultimately to repose with all his ancestry.

A number of boats pushed off from various points of the near and more distant shore, many displaying sable banners, and others having their several pipers in the bow, who from time to time poured forth a few notes of a shrill, plaintive, and wailing character, and intimated to the glower that the ceremony was about to take place. These sounds of lamentation

¹ See Lake Islands Note 51.

were but the tuning as it were of the instruments, compared with the general wail which was speedily to be raised.

A distant sound was heard from far up the lake, even as it seemed from the remote and distant glens out of which the Dochart and the Lochy pour their streams into Loch Tay. It was in a wild, inaccessible spot, where the Campbells at a subsequent period founded their strong fortress of Finlayrigg, that the redoubted commander of the Clan Quhelo drew his last breath, and, to give due pomp to his funeral, his corpse was now to be brought down the loch to the island assigned for his temporary place of rest. The funeral fleet, led by the chieftain's barge, from which a huge black banner was displayed, had made more than two thirds of its voyage ere it was visible from the eminence on which Simon Glover stood to overlook the ceremony. The instant the distant wail of the coronach was heard proceeding from the attendants on the funeral barge, all the subordinate sounds of lamentation were hushed at once, as the raven ceases to croak and the hawk to whistle whenever the scream of the eagle is heard. The boats, which had floated hither and thither upon the lake, like a flock of water-fowl dispersing themselves on its surface, now drew together with an appearance of order, that the funeral flotilla might pass onward, and that they themselves might fall into their proper places. In the meanwhile the piercing din of the war-pipes became louder and louder, and the cry from the numberless boats which followed that from which the black banner of the chief was displayed rose in wild unison up to the Tom an-chief, from which the glover viewed the spectacle. The galley which headed the procession bore on its poop a species of scaffold, upon which, arrayed in white linen, and with the face bare, was displayed the corpse of the deceased chieftain. His son and the nearest relatives filled the vessel, while a great number of boats, of every description that could be assembled, either on Loch Tay itself or brought by land carriage from Loch Earn and otherwise, followed in the rear, some of them of very frail materials. There were even currachs, composed of ox hides stretched over hoops of willow, in the manner of the ancient British, and some committed themselves to rafts formed for the occasion, from the readiest materials that occurred, and united in such a precarious manner as to render it probable that, before the accomplishment of the voyage, some of the clansmen of the deceased might be sent to attend their chieftain in the world of spirits.

When the principal flotilla came in sight of the smaller group of boats collected towards the foot of the lake, and bearing off from the little island, they hailed each other with a shout so loud and general, and terminating in a cadence so wildly prolonged, that not only the deer started from their glens for miles around, and sought the distant recesses of the mountains, but even the domestic cattle, accustomed to the voice of man, felt the full panic which the human shout strikes into the wilder tribes, and like them fled from their pasture into morasses and dingles.

Summoned forth from their convent by those sounds, the monks who inhabited the little islet began to issue from their lowly portal, with cross and banner, and as much of ecclesiastical state as they had the means of displaying, their bells at the same time, of which the edifice possessed three, pealing the death-toll over the long lake, which came to the ears of the now silent multitude, mingled with the solemn chant of the Catholic Church, raised by the monks in their procession. Various ceremonies were gone through, while the kindred of the deceased carried the body ashore, and, placing it on a bank long consecrated to the purpose, made the *deasil*¹ around the departed. When the corpse was uplifted to be borne into the church, another united yell burst from the assembled multitude, in which the deep shout of warriors and the shrill wail of females joined their notes with the tremulous voice of age and the babbling cry of childhood. The coronach was again, and for the last time, shrieked as the body was carried into the interior of the church, where only the nearest relatives of the deceased and the most distinguished of the leaders of the clan were permitted to enter². The last yell of woe was so terribly loud, and answered by so many hundred echoes, that the glover instinctively raised his hands to his ears, to shut out, or deaden at least, a sound so piercing. He kept this attitude while the hawks, owls, and other birds, scared by the wild scream, had begun to settle in their retreats, when, as he withdrew his hands, a voice close by him said—

‘Think you this, Simon Glover, the hymn of penitence and praise with which it becomes poor forlorn man, cast out from his tenement of clay, to be wafted into the presence of his Maker?’

The glover turned, and in the old man with a long white beard who stood close beside him had no difficulty, from the

¹ See Note 52

² See Highland Funeral Ceremonies Note 53

clear mild eye and the benevolent cast of features, to recognise the Carthusian monk Father Clement, no longer wearing his monastic habiliments, but wrapped in a frieze mantle and having a Highland cap on his head.

It may be recollected that the glover regarded this man with a combined feeling of respect and dislike—respect, which his judgment could not deny to the monk's person and character, and dislike, which arose from Father Clement's peculiar doctrines being the cause of his daughter's exile and his own distress. It was not, therefore, with sentiments of unmixed satisfaction that he returned the greetings of the father, and replied to the reiterated question, What he thought of the funeral rites which were discharged in so wild a manner—'I know not, my good father, but these men do their duty to their deceased chief according to the fashion of their ancestors: they mean to express their regret for their friend's loss and their prayers to Heaven in his behalf, and that which is done of good will must, to my thinking, be accepted favourably. Had it been otherwise, methinks they had ere now been enlightened to do better.'

'Thou art deceived,' answered the monk. 'God has sent His light amongst us all, though in various proportions, but man wilfully shuts his eyes and prefers darkness. This benighted people mingle with the ritual of the Roman Church the old heathen ceremonies of their own fathers, and thus unite with the abominations of a church corrupted by wealth and power the cruel and bloody ritual of savage paynims.'

'Father,' said Simon, abruptly, 'methinks your presence were more useful in yonder chapel, aiding your brethren in the discharge of their clerical duties, than in troubling and unsettling the belief of an humble though ignorant Christian like myself.'

'And wherefore say, good brother, that I would unfix thy principles of belief?' answered Clement. 'So Heaven deal with me, as, were my life blood necessary to cement the mind of any man to the holy religion he professeth, it should be freely poured out for the purpose.'

'Your speech is fair, father, I grant you,' said the glover, 'but if I am to judge the doctrine by the fruits, Heaven has punished me by the hand of the church for having hearkened thereto. Ere I heard you, my confessor was little moved though I might have owned to have told a merry tale upon the ale bench, even if a friar or a nun were the subject. If at

a time I had called Father Hubert a better hunter of hares than of souls, I confessed me to the Vicar Vinesauf, who laughed and made me pay a reckoning for penance, or if I had said that the Vicar Vinesauf was more constant to his cup than to his breviary, I confessed me to Father Hubert, and a new hawking-glove made all well again, and thus I, my conscience, and Mother Church lived together on terms of peace, friendship, and mutual forbearance. But since I have listened to you, Father Clement, this goodly union is broke to pieces, and nothing is thundered in my ear but purgatory in the next world and fire and fagot in this. Therefore, avoid you, Father Clement, or speak to those who can understand your doctrine. I have no heart to be a martyr. I have never in my whole life had courage enough so much as to snuff a candle with my fingers, and, to speak the truth, I am minded to go back to Perth, sue out my pardon in the spiritual court, carry my fagot to the gallows-foot in token of recantation, and purchase myself once more the name of a good Catholic, were it at the price of all the worldly wealth that remains to me.

'You are angry, my dearest brother,' said Clement, 'and repent you on the pinch of a little worldly danger and a little worldly loss for the good thoughts which you once entertained.'

'You speak at ease, Father Clement, since I think you have long forsworn the wealth and goods of the world, and are prepared to yield up your life when it is demanded in exchange for the doctrine you preach and believe. You are as ready to put on your pitched shirt and brimstone head-gear as a naked man is to go to his bed, and it would seem you have not much more reluctance to the ceremony. But I still wear that which clings to me. My wealth is still my own, and I thank Heaven it is a decent pittance whereon to live, my life, too, is that of a hale old man of sixty, who is in no haste to bring it to a close; and if I were poor as Job and on the edge of the grave, must I not still cling to my daughter, whom your doctrines have already cost so dear?'

'Thy daughter, friend Simon,' said the Carmelite [Carthusian], 'may be truly called an angel upon earth.'

'Ay, and by listening to your doctrines, father, she is now like to be called on to be an angel in heaven, and to be transported thither in a chariot of fire.'

'Nay, my good brother,' said Clement, 'desist, I pray you, to speak of what you little understand. Since it is wasting time to show thee the light that thou chafest against, yet

listen to that which I have to say touching thy daughter, whose temporal felicity, though I weigh it not even for an instant in the scale against that which is spiritual, is, nevertheless, in its order, as dear to Clement Blair as to her own father'

The tears stood in the old man's eyes as he spoke, and Simon Glover was in some degree mollified as he again addressed him

'One would think thee, Father Clement, the kindest and most amiable of men, how comes it, then, that thy steps are haunted by general ill-will wherever thou chancest to turn them? I could lay my life thou hast contrived already to offend yonder half-score of poor friars in their water-girdled cage, and that you have been prohibited from attendance on the funeral?'

'Even so, my son,' said the Carthusian, 'and I doubt whether their malice will suffer me to remain in this country. I did but speak a few sentences about the superstition and folly of frequenting St. Fillan's church, to detect theft by means of his bell, of bathing mad patients in his pool, to cure their infirmity of mind, and lo! the persecutors have cast me forth of their communion, as they will speedily cast me out of this life.'

'Lo you there now,' said the glover, 'see what it is for a man that cannot take a warning! Well, Father Clement, men will not cast me forth unless it were as a companion of yours. I pray you, therefore, tell me what you have to say of my daughter, and let us be less neighbours than we have been.'

'This, then, brother Simon, I have to acquaint you with. This young chief, who is swoln with contemplation of his own power and glory, loves one thing better than it all, and that is thy daughter.'

'He, Conachar!' exclaimed Simon. 'My runagate apprentice look up to my daughter!'

'Alas!' said Clement, 'how close sits our worldly pride, even as ivy clings to the wall, and cannot be separated! Look up to thy daughter, good Simon? Alas, no! The captain of Clan Quhele, great as he is, and greater as he soon expects to be, looks *down* to the daughter of the Perth burgess, and considers himself demeaned in doing so. But, to use his own profane expression, Catharine is dearer to him than life here and Heaven hereafter. he cannot live without her.'

'Then he may die, if he lists,' said Simon Glover, 'for she is betrothed to an honest burghess of Perth, and I would not break my word to make my daughter bride to the Prince of Scotland'

'I thought it would be your answer,' replied the monk, 'I would, worthy friend, thou couldst carry into thy spiritual concerns some part of that daring and resolved spirit with which thou canst direct thy temporal affairs'

'Hush thee—hush, Father Clement!' answered the glover, 'when thou fallest into that vein of argument, thy words savour of blazing tar, and that is a scent I like not As to Catharine, I must manage as I can, so as not to displease the young dignitary, but well is it for me that she is far beyond his reach.'

'She must then be distant indeed,' said the Carmelite [Carthusian] 'And now, brother Simon, since you think it perilous to own me and my opinions, I must walk alone with my own doctrines and the dangers they draw on me But should your eye, less blinded than it now is by worldly hopes and fears, ever turn a glance back on him who soon may be snatched from you, remember, that by nought save a deep sense of the truth and importance of the doctrine which he taught could Clement Blair have learned to encounter, nay, to provoke, the animosity of the powerful and inveterate, to alarm the fears of the jealous and timid, to walk in the world as he belonged not to it, and to be accounted mad of men, that he might, if possible, win souls to God. Heaven be my witness, that I would comply in all lawful things to conciliate the love and sympathy of my fellow-creatures! It is no light thing to be shunned by the worthy as an infected patient, to be persecuted by the Pharisees of the day as an unbelieving heretic, to be regarded with horror at once and contempt by the multitude, who consider me as a madman, who may be expected to turn mischievous But were all those evils multiplied an hundredfold, the fire within must not be stifled, the voice which says within me "Speak" must receive obedience Woe unto me if I preach not the Gospel, even should I at length preach it from amidst the pile of flames!'

So spoke this bold witness, one of those whom Heaven raised up from time to time to preserve amidst the most ignorant ages, and to carry down to those which succeed them, a manifestation of unadulterated Christianity, from the time of the Apostles to the age when, favoured by the invention of

printing, the Reformation broke out in full splendour. The selfish policy of the glover was exposed in his own eyes, and he felt himself contemptible as he saw the Carmelite [Carthusian] turn from him in all the hallowedness of resignation. He was even conscious of a momentary inclination to follow the example of the preacher's philanthropy and disinterested zeal, but it glanced like a flash of lightning through a dark vault, where there lies nothing to catch the blaze, and he slowly descended the hill in a direction different from that of the Carthusian, forgetting him and his doctrines, and buried in anxious thoughts about his child's fate and his own.

CHAPTER XXVIII

What want these outlaws conquerors should have
But history's purchased page to call them great,
A wider space, an ornamented grave ?
Their hopes were not less warm, their souls were full as brave

BYRON

THE funeral obsequies being over, the same flotilla which had proceeded in solemn and sad array down the lake prepared to return with displayed banners, and every demonstration of mirth and joy, for there was but brief time to celebrate festivals when the awful conflict betwixt the Clan Quhele and their most formidable rivals so nearly approached. It had been agreed, therefore, that the funeral feast should be blended with that usually given at the inauguration of the young chief

Some objections were made to this arrangement, as containing an evil omen. But, on the other hand, it had a species of recommendation, from the habits and feelings of the Highlanders, who, to this day, are wont to mingle a degree of solemn mirth with their mourning, and something resembling melancholy with their mirth. The usual aversion to speak or think of those who have been beloved and lost is less known to this grave and enthusiastic race than it is to others. You hear not only the young mention (as is everywhere usual) the merits and the character of parents, who have, in the course of nature, predeceased them, but the widowed partner speaks, in ordinary conversation, of the lost spouse, and, what is still stranger, the parents allude frequently to the beauty or valour of the child whom they have interred. The Scottish Highlanders appear to regard the separation of friends by death as something less absolute and complete than it is generally esteemed in other countries, and converse of the dear connexions who have sought the grave before them as if they had gone upon a long journey in which they themselves must soon follow. The funeral feast, therefore, being a general

custom throughout Scotland, was not, in the opinion of those who were to share it, unseemingly mingled, on the present occasion, with the festivities which hailed the succession to the chieftainship.

The barge which had lately borne the dead to the grave now conveyed the young Maclean to his new command, and the minstrels sent forth their gayest notes to gratulate Eachin's succession, as they had lately sounded their most doleful dirges when carrying Gilchrist to his grave. From the attendant flotilla rang notes of triumph and jubilee, instead of those yells of lamentation which had so lately disturbed the echoes of Loch Tay, and a thousand voices hailed the youthful chieftain as he stood on the poop, armed at all points, in the flower of early manhood, beauty, and activity, on the very spot where his father's corpse had so lately been extended, and surrounded by triumphant friends, as that had been by desolate mourners. One boat kept closest of the flotilla to the honoured galley. Torquil of the Oak, a grizzled giant, was steersman, and his eight sons, each exceeding the ordinary stature of mankind, pulled the oars. Like some powerful and favourite wolf-hound, unloosed from his couples, and frolicking around a liberal master, the boat of the foster-brethren passed the chieftain's barge, now on one side and now on another, and even rowed around it, as if in extravagance of joy, while, at the same time, with the jealous vigilance of the animal we have compared it to, they made it dangerous for any other of the flotilla to approach so near as themselves, from the risk of being run down by their impetuous and reckless manœuvres. Raised to an eminent rank in the clan by the succession of their foster-brother to the command of the Clan Quhele, this was the tumultuous and almost terrible mode in which they testified their peculiar share in their chief's triumph.

Far behind, and with different feelings, on the part of one at least of the company, came the small boat in which, manned by the Booshalloch and one of his sons, Simon Glover was a passenger.

'If we are bound for the head of the lake,' said Simon to his friend, 'we shall hardly be there for hours.'

But as he spoke the crew of the boat of the foster-brethren, or *leichtach*, on a signal from the chief's galley, lay on their oars until the Booshalloch's boat came up, and throwing on board a rope of hides, which Niel made fast to the head of his skiff, they stretched to their oars once more, and, notwith-

standing they had the small boat in tow, swept through the lake with almost the same rapidity as before. The skiff was tugged on with a velocity which seemed to hazard the pulling her under water, or the separation of her head from her other timbers.

Simon Glover saw with anxiety the reckless fury of their course, and the bows of the boat occasionally brought within an inch or two of the level of the water, and though his friend, Niel Booshalloch, assured him it was all done in especial honour, he heartily wished his voyage might have a safe termination. It had so, and much sooner than he apprehended, for the place of festivity was not four miles distant from the sepulchral island, being chosen to suit the chieftain's course, which lay to the south-east, so soon as the banquet should be concluded.

A bay on the southern side of Loch Tay presented a beautiful beach of sparkling sand, on which the boats might land with ease, and a dry meadow, covered with turf, verdant considering the season, behind and around which rose high banks, fringed with copsewood, and displaying the lavish preparations which had been made for the entertainment.

The Highlanders, well known for ready hatchet-men, had constructed a long arbour or silvan banqueting-room, capable of receiving two hundred men, while a number of smaller huts around seemed intended for sleeping-apartments. The uprights, the couples, and roof-tree of the temporary hall were composed of mountain-pine, still covered with its bark. The framework of the sides was of planks or spars of the same material, closely interwoven with the leafy boughs of the fir and other ever-greens, which the neighbouring woods afforded, while the hills had furnished plenty of heath to form the roof. Within this silvan palace the most important personages present were invited to hold high festival. Others of less note were to feast in various long sheds constructed with less care, and tables of sod, or rough planks, placed in the open air, were allotted to the numberless multitude. At a distance were to be seen piles of glowing charcoal or blazing wood, around which countless cooks toiled, bustled, and fretted, like so many demons working in their native element. Pits, wrought in the hillside, and lined with heated stones, served as ovens for stewing immense quantities of beef, mutton, and venison, wooden spits supported sheep and goats, which were roasted entire, others were cut into joints, and seethed in caldrons made of the animals' own skins, sewed hastily together and filled with water, while huge

quantities of pike, trout, salmon, and char were broiled with more ceremony on glowing embers. The glover had seen many a Highland banquet, but never one the preparations for which were on such a scale of barbarous profusion.

He had little time, however, to admire the scene around him, for, as soon as they landed on the beach, the Booshalloch observed with some embarrassment, that, as they had not been bidden to the table of the dais, to which he seemed to have expected an invitation, they had best secure a place in one of the inferior bothies or booths, and was leading the way in that direction, when he was stopped by one of the body-guards, seeming to act as master of ceremonies, who whispered something in his ear.

'I thought so,' said the herdsman, much relieved — 'I thought neither the stranger nor the man that has my charge would be left out at the high table.'

They were conducted accordingly into the ample lodge, within which were long ranges of tables already mostly occupied by the guests, while those who acted as domestics were placing upon them the abundant though rude materials of the festival. The young chief, although he certainly saw the glover and the herdsman enter, did not address any personal salute to either, and their places were assigned them in a distant corner, far beneath the salt, a huge piece of antique silver-plate, the only article of value that the table displayed, and which was regarded by the clan as a species of palladium, only produced and used on the most solemn occasions, such as the present.

The Booshalloch, somewhat discontented, muttered to Simon as he took his place — 'These are changed days, friend. His father, rest his soul, would have spoken to us both, but these are bad manners which he has learned among you Sassenachs in the Low Country.'

To this remark the glover did not think it necessary to reply, instead of which he adverted to the evergreens, and particularly to the skins and other ornaments with which the interior of the bower was decorated. The most remarkable part of these ornaments was a number of Highland shirts of mail, with steel bonnets, battle axes, and two-handed swords to match, which hung around the upper part of the room, together with targets highly and richly embossed. Each mail shirt was hung over a well dressed stag's hide, which at once displayed the armour to advantage and saved it from suffering by damp.

'These,' whispered the Booshalloch, 'are the arms of the

chosen champions of the Clan Quhele. They are twenty-nine in number, as you see, Eachin himself being the thirtieth, who wears his armour to-day, else had there been thirty. And he has not got such a good hauberk after all as he should wear on Palm Sunday. These nine suits of harness, of such large size, are for the leichtach, from whom so much is expected.'

'And these goodly deer-hides,' said Simon, the spirit of his profession awakening at the sight of the goods in which he traded — 'think you the chief will be disposed to chaffer for them? They are in demand for the doublets which knights wear under their armour.'

'Did I not pray you,' said Niel Booshalloch, 'to say nothing on that subject?'

'It is the mail shirts I speak of,' said Simon — 'may I ask if any of them were made by our celebrated Perth armourer, called Henry of the Wynd?'

'Thou art more unlucky than before,' said Niel 'that man's name is to Eachin's temper like a whirlwind upon the lake, yet no man knows for what cause.'

'I can guess,' thought our glover, but gave no utterance to the thought, and, having twice lighted on unpleasant subjects of conversation, he prepared to apply himself, like those around him, to his food, without starting another topic.

We have said as much of the preparations as may lead the reader to conclude that the festival, in respect of the quality of the food, was of the most rude description, consisting chiefly of huge joints of meat, which were consumed with little respect to the fasting season, although several of the friars of the island convent graced and hallowed the board by their presence. The platters were of wood, and so were the hooped cogues or cups out of which the guests quaffed their liquor, as also the broth or juice of the meat, which was held a delicacy. There were also various preparations of milk which were highly esteemed, and were eaten out of similar vessels. Bread was the scarcest article at the banquet, but the glover and his patron Niel were served with two small loaves expressly for their own use. In eating, as, indeed, was then the case all over Britain, the guests used their knives called skenes, or the large poniards named dirks, without troubling themselves by the reflection that they might occasionally have served different or more fatal purposes.

At the upper end of the table stood a vacant seat, elevated a step or two above the floor. It was covered with a canopy

of hollow boughs and ivy, and there rested against it a sheathed sword and a folded banner. This had been the seat of the deceased chieftain, and was left vacant in honour of him. Each occupied a lower chair on the right hand of the place of honour.

The reader would be greatly mistaken who should follow out this description by supposing that the guests behaved like a herd of hungry wolves, rushing upon a feast rarely offered to them. On the contrary, the Clan Quhele conducted themselves with that species of courteous reserve and attention to the wants of others which is often found in primitive nations, especially such as are always in arms, because a general observance of the rules of courtesy is necessary to prevent quarrels, bloodshed, and death. The guests took the places assigned them by Torquil of the Oak, who, acting as *marischal taeh*, or a sewer of the mess, touched with a white wand, without speaking a word, the place where each was to sit. Thus placed in order, the company patiently waited for the portion assigned them, which was distributed among them by the *leichtach*, the bravest men or more distinguished warriors of the tribe being accommodated with a double mess, emphatically called *brayfir*, or the portion of a man. When the sewers themselves had seen every one served, they resumed their places at the festival, and were each served with one of these larger messes of food. Water was placed within each man's reach, and a handful of soft moss served the purposes of a table napkin, so that, as at an Eastern banquet, the hands were washed as often as the mess was changed. For amusement, the bard recited the praises of the deceased chief, and expressed the clan's confidence in the blossoming virtues of his successor. The *seannachie* recited the genealogy of the tribe, which they traced to the race of the Dalriads, the harpers played within, while the war-pipes cheered the multitude without. The conversation among the guests was grave, subdued, and civil, no jest was attempted beyond the bounds of a very gentle pleasantry, calculated only to excite a passing smile. There were no raised voices, no contentious arguments, and Simon Glover had heard a hundred times more noise at a guild-feast in Perth than was made on this occasion by two hundred wild mountaineers.

Even the liquor itself did not seem to raise the festive party above the same tone of decorous gravity. It was of various kinds. Wine appeared in very small quantities, and was

served out only to the principal guests, among which honoured number Simon Glover was again included. The wine and the two wheaten loaves were indeed the only marks of notice which he received during the feast, but Niel Booshalloch, jealous of his master's reputation for hospitality, failed not to enlarge on them as proofs of high distinction. Distilled liquors, since so generally used in the Highlands, were then comparatively unknown. The usquebaugh was circulated in small quantities, and was highly flavoured with a decoction of saffron and other herbs, so as to resemble a medicinal potion rather than a festive cordial. Cider and mead were seen at the entertainment, but ale, brewed in great quantities for the purpose, and flowing round without restriction, was the liquor generally used, and that was drunk with a moderation much less known among the more modern Highlanders. A cup to the memory of the deceased chieftain was the first pledge solemnly proclaimed after the banquet was finished, and a low murmur of benedictions was heard from the company, while the monks alone, uplifting their united voices, sung *Requiem eternam dona*. An unusual silence followed, as if something extraordinary was expected, when Eachin arose with a bold and manly, yet modest, grace, and ascended the vacant seat or throne, saying with dignity and firmness—

‘This seat and my father’s inheritance I claim as my right—so prosper me God and St Barr!’

‘How will you rule your father’s children?’ said an old man, the uncle of the deceased.

‘I will defend them with my father’s sword, and distribute justice to them under my father’s banner.’

The old man, with a trembling hand, unsheathed the ponderous weapon, and, holding it by the blade, offered the hilt to the young chieftain’s grasp, at the same time Torquil of the Oak unfurled the pennon of the tribe, and swung it repeatedly over Eachin’s head, who, with singular grace and dexterity, brandished the huge claymore as in its defence. The guests raised a yelling shout to testify their acceptance of the patriarchal chief who claimed their allegiance, nor was there any who, in the graceful and agile youth before them, was disposed to recollect the subject of sinister vaticinations. As he stood in glittering mail, resting on the long sword, and acknowledging by gracious gestures the acclamations which rent the air within, without, and around, Simon Glover was tempted to doubt whether this majestic figure was that of the same lad

whom he had often treated with little ceremony, and began to have some apprehension of the consequences of having done so. A general burst of minstrelsy succeeded to the acclamations, and rock and greenwood rang to harp and pipes, as lately to shout and yell of woe.

It would be tedious to pursue the progress of the inaugural feast, or detail the pledges that were quaffed to former heroes of the clan, and above all to the twenty-nine brave galloglasses who were to fight in the approaching conflict, under the eye and leading of their young chief. The bards, assuming in old times the prophetic character combined with their own, ventured to assure them of the most distinguished victory, and to predict the fury with which the blue falcon, the emblem of the Clan Quhele, should rend to pieces the mountain cat, the well known badge of the Clan Chattan.

It was approaching sunset when a bowl, called the grace-cup, made of oak, hooped with silver, was banded round the table as the signal of dispersion, although it was left free to any who chose a longer carouse to retreat to any of the outer bothies. As for Simon Glover, the Booshalloch conducted him to a small hut, contrived, it would seem, for the use of a single individual, where a bed of heath and moss was arranged as well as the season would permit, and an ample supply of such delicacies as the late feast afforded showed that all care had been taken for the inhabitant's accommodation.

'Do not leave this hut,' said the Booshalloch, taking leave of his friend and *protégé* 'this is your place of rest. But apartments are lost on such a night of confusion, and if the badger leaves his hole the tod will creep into it.'

To Simon Glover this arrangement was by no means disagreeable. He had been wearied by the noise of the day, and felt desirous of repose. After eating, therefore, a morsel, which his appetite scarce required, and drinking a cup of wine to expel the cold, he muttered his evening prayer, wrapt himself in his cloak, and lay down on a couch which old acquaintance had made familiar and easy to him. The hum and murmur, and even the occasional shouts, of some of the festive multitude who continued revelling without did not long interrupt his repose, and in about ten minutes he was as fast asleep as if he had lain in his own bed in Curfew Street.

CHAPTER XXIX

Still harping on my daughter.

Hamlet

TWO hours before the black-cock crew, Simon Glover was wakened by a well-known voice, which called him by name

‘What, Conachar!’ he replied, as he started from sleep, ‘is the morning so far advanced?’ and, raising his eyes, the person of whom he was dreaming stood before him, and at the same moment, the events of yesterday rushing on his recollection, he saw with surprise that the vision retained the form which sleep had assigned it, and it was not the mail-clad Highland chief, with claymore in hand, as he had seen him the preceding night, but Conachar of Curfew Street, in his humble apprentice’s garb, holding in his hand a switch of oak. An apparition would not more have surprised our Perth burgher. As he gazed with wonder, the youth turned upon him a piece of lighted bog-wood which he carried in a lantern, and to his waking exclamation replied—

‘Even so, father Simon. it is Conachar, come to renew our old acquaintance, when our intercourse will attract least notice’

So saying, he sat down on a tressel which answered the purpose of a chair, and placing the lantern beside him, proceeded in the most friendly tone—

‘I have tasted of thy good cheer many a day, father Simon, I trust thou hast found no lack in my family?’

‘None whatever, Eachin MacIain,’ answered the glover, for the simplicity of the Celtic language and manners rejects all honorary titles, ‘it was even too good for this fasting season, and much too good for me, since I must be ashamed to think how hard you fared in Curfew Street’

‘Even too well, to use your own word,’ said Conachar, ‘for the deserts of an idle apprentice and for the wants of a young Highlander. But yesterday, if there was, as I trust, enough

of food, found you not, good glover, some lack of courteous welcome? Excuse it not—I know you did so. But I am young in authority with my people, and I must not too early draw their attention to the period of my residence in the Lowlands, which, however, I can never forget.’

‘I understand the cause entirely,’ said Simon, ‘and therefore it is unwillingly, and as it were by force, that I have made so early a visit hither.’

‘Hush, father—hush! It is well you are come to see some of my Highland splendour while it yet sparkles. Return after Palm Sunday, and who knows whom or what you may find in the territories we now possess! The wildeat may have made his lodge where the banqueting-bower of MacIain now stands.’

The young chief was silent, and pressed the top of the rod to his lips, as if to guard against uttering more.

‘There is no fear of that, Eachin,’ said Simon, in that vague way in which lukewarm comforters endeavour to turn the reflections of their friends from the consideration of inevitable danger.

‘There is fear, and there is peril of utter ruin,’ answered Eachin, ‘and there is positive certainty of great loss. I marvel my father consented to this wily proposal of Albany. I would MacGillie Chattanach would agree with me, and then, instead of wasting our best blood against each other, we would go down together to Strathmore and kill and take possession. I would rule at Perth and he at Dundee, and all the great strath should be our own to the banks of the Firth of Tay. Such is the policy I have caught from your old grey head, father Simon, when holding a trencher at thy back, and listening to thy evening talk with Bailie Craigdallie.’

‘The tongue is well called an unruly member,’ thought the glover. ‘Here have I been holding a candle to the devil, to show him the way to mischief.’

But he only said aloud, ‘These plans come too late.’

‘Too late indeed!’ answered Eachin. ‘The indentures of battle are signed by our marks and seals, the burning hate of the Clan Quhele and Clan Chattan is blown up to an inextinguishable flame by mutual insults and boasts. Yes, the time is passed by. But to thine own affairs, father Glover. It is religion that has brought thee hither, as I learn from Niel Booshalloch. Surely, my experience of thy prudence did not lead me to suspect thee of any quarrel with Mother Church. As for my old acquaintance, Father Clement, he is one of those

who hunt after the crown of martyrdom, and think a stake, surrounded with blazing fagots, better worth embracing than a willing bride. He is a very knight-errant in defence of his religious notions, and does battle wherever he comes. He hath already a quarrel with the monks of Sibyl's Isle yonder about some point of doctrine. Hast seen him ?

'I have,' answered Simon, 'but we spoke little together, the time being pressing.'

'He may have said that there is a third person — one more likely, I think, to be a true fugitive for religion than either you, a shrewd citizen, or he, a wrangling preacher — who would be right heartily welcome to share our protection ? Thou art dull, man, and wilt not guess my meaning — thy daughter, Catharine ?'

These last words the young chief spoke in English, and he continued the conversation in that language, as if apprehensive of being overheard, and, indeed, as if under the sense of some involuntary hesitation.

'My daughter Catharine,' said the glover, remembering what the Carthusian had told him, 'is well and safe.'

'But where or with whom ?' said the young chief. 'And wherefore came she not with you ? Think you the Clan Quhele have no caillachs as active as old Dorothy, whose hand has warmed my hafts before now, to wait upon the daughter of their chieftain's master ?'

'Again I thank you,' said the glover, 'and doubt neither your power nor your will to protect my daughter, as well as myself. But an honourable lady, the friend of Sir Patrick Charteris, hath offered her a safe place of refuge without the risk of a toilsome journey through a desolate and distracted country.'

'Oh, ay, Sir Patrick Charteris,' said Eachin, in a more reserved and distant tone, 'he must be preferred to all men, without doubt. He is your friend, I think ?'

Simon Glover longed to punish this affectation of a boy who had been scolded four times a-day for running into the street to see Sir Patrick Charteris ride past, but he checked his spirit of repartee, and simply said —

'Sir Patrick Charteris has been provost of Perth for seven years, and it is likely is so still, since the magistrates are elected, not in Lent, but at St Martinmas.'

'Ah, father Glover,' said the youth, in his kinder and more familiar mode of address, 'you are so used to see the sumptu-

ous shows and pageants of Perth, that you would but little relish our barbarous festival in comparison. What didst thou think of our ceremonial of yesterday ?'

'It was noble and touching,' said the glover, 'and to me, who knew your father, most especially so. When you rested on the sword and looked around you, methought I saw mine old friend Gilchrist MacIan arisen from the dead and renewed in years and in strength.'

'I played my part there boldly, I trust, and showed little of that paltry apprentice boy whom you used to — use just as he deserved ?'

'Eachin resembles Conachar,' said the glover, 'no more than a salmon resembles a par, though men say they are the same fish in a different state, or than a butterfly resembles a grub.'

'Thinkest thou that, while I was taking upon me the power which all women love, I would have been myself an object for a maiden's eye to rest upon ? To speak plain, what would Catharine have thought of me in the ceremonial ?'

'We approach the shallows now,' thought Simon Glover, 'and without nice pilotage we drive right on shore.'

'Most women like show, Eachin, but I think my daughter Catharine be an exception. She would rejoice in the good fortune of her household friend and playmate, but she would not value the splendid MacIan, captain of Clan Quhele, more than the orphan Conachar.'

'She is ever generous and disinterested,' replied the young chief. 'But yourself, father, have seen the world for many more years than she has done, and can better form a judgment what power and wealth do for those who enjoy them. Think, and speak sincerely, what would be your own thoughts if you saw your Catharine standing under yonder canopy, with the command over an hundred hills, and the devoted obedience of ten thousand vassals, and as the price of these advantages, her hand in that of the man who loves her the best in the world ?'

'Meaning in your own, Conachar ?' said Simon.

'Ay, Conachar call me. I love the name, since it was by that I have been known to Catharine.'

'Sincerely, then,' said the glover, endeavouring to give the least offensive turn to his reply, 'my inmost thought would be the earnest wish that Catharine and I were safe in our humble booth in Curfew Street, with Dorothy for our only vassal.'

'And with poor Conachar also, I trust ? You would not leave him to pine away in solitary grandeur ?'

'I would not,' answered the glover, 'wish so ill to the Clan Quhele, mine ancient friends, as to deprive them, at the moment of emergency, of a brave young chief, and that chief of the fame which he is about to acquire at their head in the approaching conflict'

Eachin bit his lip to suppress his irritated feelings as he replied — 'Words — words — empty words, father Simon. You fear the Clan Quhele more than you love them, and you suppose their indignation would be formidable should their chief marry the daughter of a burghess of Perth'

'And if I do fear such an issue, Hector MacIan, have I not reason? How have ill-assorted marriages had issue in the house of MacCallanmore, in that of the powerful MacLeans — nay, of the Lords of the Isles themselves? What has ever come of them but divorce and exheredation, sometimes worse fate, to the ambitious intruder? You could not marry my child before a priest, and you could only wed her with your left hand, and I' — he checked the strain of impetuosity which the subject inspired, and concluded — 'and I am an honest though humble burgher of Perth, who would rather my child were the lawful and undoubted spouse of a citizen in my own rank than the licensed concubine of a monarch'

'I will wed Catharine before the priest and before the world, before the altar and before the black stones of Iona,' said the impetuous young man. 'She is the love of my youth, and there is not a tie in religion or honour but I will bind myself by them' I have sounded my people If we do but win this combat — and, with the hope of gaining Catharine, we SHALL win it — my heart tells me so — I shall be so much lord over their affections that, were I to take a bride from the alms-house, so it was my pleasure, they would hail her as if she were a daughter of MacCallanmore But you reject my suit?' said Eachin, sternly

'You put words of offence in my mouth,' said the old man, 'and may next punish me for them, since I am wholly in your power But with my consent my daughter shall never wed save in her own degree Her heart would break amid the constant wars and scenes of bloodshed which connect themselves with your lot If you really love her, and recollect her dread of strife and combat, you would not wish her to be subjected to the train of military horrors in which you, like your father, must needs be inevitably and eternally engaged Choose a bride amongst the daughters of the mountain-chiefs, my son,

or fiery Lowland nobles You are fair, young, rich, high born, and powerful, and will not woo in vain 'You will readily find one who will rejoice in your conquests, and cheer you under defeat. To Catharine, the one would be as frightful as the other A warrior must wear a steel gauntlet a glove of kid skin would be torn to pieces in an hour'

A dark cloud passed over the face of the young chief, lately animated with so much fire.

'Farewell,' he said, 'the only hope which could have lighted me to fame or victory!' He remained for a space silent, and intensely thoughtful, with downcast eyes, a lowering brow, and folded arms At length he raised his hands, and said, 'Father, — for such you have been to me — I am about to tell you a secret. Reason and pride both advise me to be silent, but fate urges me, and must be obeyed. I am about to lodge in you the deepest and dearest secret that man ever confided to man But beware — end this conference how it will — beware how you ever breathe a syllable of what I am now to trust to you, for know that, were you to do so in the most remote corner of Scotland, I have ears to hear it even there, and a hand and poniard to reach a traitor's bosom. I am — but the word will not out!'

'Do not speak it then,' said the prudent glover 'a secret is no longer safe when it crosses the lips of him who owns it, and I desire not a confidence so dangerous as you menace me with.'

'Ay, but I must speak, and you must hear,' said the youth 'In this age of battle, father, you have yourself been a combatant?'

'Once only,' replied Simon, 'when the Southron assaulted the Fair City I was summoned to take my part in the defence, as my tenure required, like that of other craftsmen, who are bound to keep watch and ward.'

'And how felt you upon that matter?' inquired the young chief.

'What can that import to the present business?' said Simon, in some surprise.

'Much, else I had not asked the question,' answered Eachin, in the tone of haughtiness which from time to time he assumed.

'An old man is easily brought to speak of olden times,' said Simon, not unwilling, on an instant's reflection, to lead the conversation away from the subject of his daughter, 'and I must needs confess my feelings were much short of the high,

cheerful confidence, nay, the pleasure, with which I have seen other men go to battle. My life and profession were peaceful, and though I have not wanted the spirit of a man, when the time demanded it, yet I have seldom slept worse than the night before that onslaught. My ideas were harrowed by the tales we were told — nothing short of the truth — about the Saxon archers how they drew shafts of a cloth-yard length, and used bows a third longer than ours. When I fell into a broken slumber, if but a straw in the mattress pricked my side, I started and waked, thinking an English arrow was quivering in my body. In the morning, as I began for very weariness to sink into some repose, I was waked by the tolling of the common bell, which called us burghers to the walls, I never heard its sound peal so like a passing knell before or since.'

'Go on — what further chanced?' demanded Eachin.

'I did on my harness,' said Simon, 'such as it was, took my mother's blessing, a high-spirited woman, who spoke of my father's actions for the honour of the Fair Town. This heartened me, and I felt still bolder when I found myself ranked among the other crafts, all bowmen, for thou knowest the Perth citizens have good skill in archery. We were dispersed on the walls, several knights and squires in armour of proof being mingled amongst us, who kept a bold countenance, confident perhaps in their harness, and informed us, for our encouragement, that they would cut down with their swords and axes any of those who should attempt to quit their post. I was kindly assured of this myself by the old Kempe of Kinfauns, as he was called, this good Sir Patrick's father, then our provost. He was a grandson of the Red Rover, Tom of Longueville, and a likely man to keep his word, which he addressed to me in especial, because a night of much discomfort may have made me look paler than usual, and, besides, I was but a lad.'

'And did his exhortation add to your fear or your resolution?' said Eachin, who seemed very attentive.

'To my resolution,' answered Simon, 'for I think nothing can make a man so bold to face one danger at some distance in his front as the knowledge of another close behind him, to push him forward. Well, I mounted the walls in tolerable heart, and was placed with others on the Spey Tower, being accounted a good bowman. But a very cold fit seized me as I saw the English, in great order, with their archers in front, and their men-at-arms behind, marching forward to the attack in

strong columns, three in number. They came on steadily, and some of us would fain have shot at them, but it was strictly forbidden, and we were obliged to remain motionless, sheltering ourselves behind the battlement as we best might. As the Southron formed their long ranks into lines, each man occupying his place as by magic, and preparing to cover themselves by large shields, called pavesses, which they planted before them, I again felt a strange breathlessness, and some desire to go home for a glass of distilled waters. But as I looked aside, I saw the worthy Kempe of Kinfauns bending a large cross bow, and I thought it pity he should waste the bolt on a true-hearted Scotsman, when so many English were in presence, so I e'en staid where I was, being in a comfortable angle, formed by two battlements. The English then strode forward, and drew their bow strings — not to the breast, as your Highland kerne do, but to the ear — and sent off their volleys of swallow-tails before we could call on St. Andrew. I winked when I saw them haul up their tackle, and I believe I started as the shafts began to rattle against the parapet. But looking round me, and seeing none hurt but John Squallit, the town crier, whose jaws were pierced through with a cloth-yard shaft, I took heart of grace, and shot in my turn with good will and good aim. A little man I shot at, who had just peeped out from behind his target, dropt with a shaft through his shoulder. The provost cried, "Well stitched, Simon Glover!" "St. John, for his own town, my fellow craftsmen!" shouted I, though I was then but an apprentice. And if you will believe me, in the rest of the skirmish, which was ended by the foes drawing off, I drew bowstring and loosed shaft as calmly as if I had been shooting at butts instead of men's breasts. I gained some credit, and I have ever afterwards thought that, in case of necessity — for with me it had never been matter of choice — I should not have lost it again. And this is all I can tell of warlike experience in battle. Other dangers I have had, which I have endeavoured to avoid like a wise man, or, when they were inevitable, I have faced them like a true one. Upon other terms a man cannot live or hold up his head in Scotland.

'I understand your tale,' said Eachin, 'but I shall find it difficult to make you credit mine, knowing the race of which I am descended, and especially that I am the son of him whom we have this day laid in the tomb — well that he lies where he will never learn what you are now to hear! Look, my father, the light which I bear grows short and pale, a few minutes will

extinguish it, but before it expires, the hideous tale will be told. Father, I am — a COWARD! It is said at last, and the secret of my disgrace is in keeping of another!’

The young man sunk back in a species of syncope, produced by the agony of his mind as he made the fatal communication. The glover, moved as well by fear as by compassion, applied himself to recall him to life, and succeeded in doing so, but not in restoring him to composure. He hid his face with his hands, and his tears flowed plentifully and bitterly.

‘For Our Lady’s sake, be composed,’ said the old man, ‘and recall the vile word!’ I know you better than yourself you are no coward, but only too young and inexperienced, ay, and somewhat too quick of fancy, to have the steady valour of a bearded man. I would hear no other man say that of you, Conachar, without giving him the lie. You are no coward. I have seen high sparks of spirit fly from you even on slight enough provocation.’

‘High sparks of pride and passion!’ said the unfortunate youth, ‘but when saw you them supported by the resolution that should have backed them? The sparks you speak of fell on my dastardly heart as on a piece of ice which could catch fire from nothing. If my offended pride urged me to strike, my weakness of mind prompted me the next moment to fly.’

‘Want of habit,’ said Simon, ‘it is by clambering over walls that youths learn to scale precipices. Begin with slight feuds, exercise daily the arms of your country in tourney with your followers.’

‘And what leisure is there for this?’ exclaimed the young chief, starting as if something horrid had occurred to his imagination. ‘How many days are there betwixt this hour and Palm Sunday, and what is to chance then? A list inclosed, from which no man can stir, more than the poor bear who is chained to his stake. Sixty living men, the best and fiercest — one alone excepted! — which Albyn can send down from her mountains, all athirst for each other’s blood, while a king and his nobles, and shouting thousands besides, attend, as at a theatre, to encourage their demoniac fury! Blows clang, and blood flows, thicker, faster, redder, they rush on each other like madmen, they tear each other like wild beasts, the wounded are trodden to death amid the feet of their companions! Blood ebbs, arms become weak, but there must be no parley, no truce, no interruption, while any of the maimed wretches remain alive! Here is no crouching behind battlements, no fighting with missile weapons

all is hand to hand, till hands can no longer be raised to maintain the ghastly conflict! If such a field is so horrible in idea, what think you it will be in reality?'

The glover remained silent.

'I say again, what think you?'

'I can only pity you, Conachar,' said Simon. 'It is hard to be the descendant of a lofty line — the son of a noble father — the leader by birth of a gallant array, and yet to want, or think you want, for still I trust the fault lies much in a quick fancy, that over estimates danger — to want that dogged quality which is possessed by every game cock that is worth a handful of corn, every hound that is worth a mess of offal. But how chanced it that, with such a consciousness of inability to fight in this battle, you proffered even now to share your chieftdom with my daughter? Your power must depend on your fighting this combat, and in that Catharine cannot help you.'

'You mistake, old man,' replied Eachin. 'were Catharine to look kindly on the earnest love I bear her, it would carry me against the front of the enemies with the mettle of a war-horse. Overwhelming as my sense of weakness is, the feeling that Catharine looked on would give me strength. Say yet — oh, say yet — she shall be mine if we gain the combat, and not the Gow Chrom himself, whose heart is of a piece with his anvil, ever went to battle so light as I shall do! One strong passion is conquered by another.'

'This is folly, Conachar. Cannot the recollections of your interest, your honour, your kindred, do as much to stir your courage as the thoughts of a brent-browed lass? Fie upon you, man!'

'You tell me but what I have told myself, but it is in vain,' replied Eachin, with a sigh. 'It is only whilst the timid stag is paired with the doe that he is desperate and dangerous. Be it from constitution, be it, as our Highland cailhachs will say, from the milk of the white doe, be it from my peaceful education and the experience of your strict restraint, be it, as you think, from an over-heated fancy, which paints danger yet more dangerous and ghastly than it is in reality, I cannot tell. But I know my failing, and — yes, it must be said! — so sorely dread that I cannot conquer it, that, could I have your consent to my wishes on such terms, I would even here make a pause, renounce the rank I have assumed, and retire into humble life.'

'What, turn glover at last, Conachar?' said Simon. 'This

beats the legend of St Crispin Nay — nay, your hand was not flamed for that you shall spoil me no more doe-skins'

'Jest not,' said Eachin, 'I am serious If I cannot labour, I will bring wealth enough to live without it. They will proclaim me recreant with horn and war-pipe Let them do so Catharine will love me the better that I have preferred the paths of peace to those of bloodshed, and Father Clement shall teach us to pity and forgive the world, which will load us with reproaches that wound not I shall be the happiest of men, Catharine will enjoy all that unbounded affection can confer upon her, and will be freed from apprehension of the sights and sounds of horror which your ill-assorted match would have prepared for her, and you, father Glover, shall occupy your chimney-corner, the happiest and most honoured man that ever —'

'Hold, Eachin — I prithee, hold,' said the glover, 'the fir light, with which this discourse must terminate, burns very low, and I would speak a word in my turn, and plain dealing is best Though it may vex, or perhaps enrage, you, let me end these visions by saying at once — Catharine can never be yours A glove is the emblem of faith, and a man of my craft should therefore less than any other break his own Catharine's hand is promised — promised to a man whom you may hate, but whom you must honour — to Henry the armourer The match is fitting by degree, agreeable to their mutual wishes, and I have given my promise It is best to be plain at once, resent my refusal as you will — I am wholly in your power But nothing shall make me break my word.'

The glover spoke thus decidedly, because he was aware from experience that the very irritable disposition of his former apprentice yielded in most cases to stern and decided resolution Yet, recollecting where he was, it was with some feelings of fear that he saw the dying flame leap up and spread a flash of light on the visage of Eachin, which seemed pale as the grave, while his eye rolled like that of a maniac in his fever fit The light instantly sunk down and died, and Simon felt a momentary terror lest he should have to dispute for his life with the youth, whom he knew to be capable of violent actions when highly excited, however short a period his nature could support the measures of which his passion commenced He was relieved by the voice of Eachin, who muttered in a hoarse and altered tone —

'Let what we have spoken this night rest in silence for ever If thou bring'st it to light, thou wert better dig thine own grave.'

Thus speaking, the door of the hut opened, admitting a gleam of moonshine. The form of the retiring chief crossed it for an instant, the hurdle was then closed, and the shieling left in darkness.

Simon Glover felt relieved when a conversation fraught with offence and danger was thus peaceably terminated. But he remained deeply affected by the condition of Hector MacIan, whom he had himself bred up.

'The poor child,' said he, 'to be called up to a place of eminence, only to be hurled from it with contempt! What he told me I partly knew, having often remarked that Conachar was more prone to quarrel than to fight. But this overpowering faint-heartedness, which neither shame nor necessity can overcome, I, though no Sir William Wallace, cannot conceive. And to propose himself for a husband to my daughter, as if a bride were to find courage for herself and the bridegroom! No — no, Catharine must wed a man to whom she may say, "Husband, spare your enemy", not one in whose behalf she must cry, "Generous enemy, spare my husband."'

Tired out with these reflections, the old man at length fell asleep. In the morning he was awakened by his friend the Booshalloch, who, with something of a blank visage, proposed to him to return to his abode on the meadow at the Ballough. He apologised that the chief could not see Simon Glover that morning, being busied with things about the expected combat, and that Eachin MacIan thought the residence at the Ballough would be safest for Simon Glover's health, and had given charge that every care should be taken for his protection and accommodation.

Niel Booshalloch dilated on these circumstances, to gloss over the neglect implied in the chief's dismissing his visitor without a particular audience.

'His father knew better,' said the herdsman. 'But where should he have learned manners, poor thing, and bred up among your Perth burghers, who, excepting yourself, neighbour Glover, who speak Gaelic as well as I do, are a race incapable of civility?'

Simon Glover, it may be well believed, felt none of the want of respect which his friend resented on his account. On the contrary, he greatly preferred the quiet residence of the good herdsman to the tumultuous hospitality of the daily festival of the chief, even if there had not just passed an interview with Eachin upon a subject which it would be most painful to revive.

To the Ballough, therefore, he quietly retreated, where, could he have been secure of Catharine's safety, his leisure was spent pleasantly enough. His amusement was sailing on the lake in a little skiff, which a Highland boy managed, while the old man angled. He frequently landed on the little island, where he mused over the tomb of his old friend Gilchrist MacIain, and made friends with the monks, presenting the prior with gloves of marten's fur, and the superior officers with each of them a pair made from the skin of the wildcat. The cutting and stitching of these little presents served to beguile the time after sunset, while the family of the herdsman crowded around, admiring his address, and listening to the tales and songs with which the old man had skill to pass away a heavy evening.

It must be confessed that the cautious glover avoided the conversation of Father Clement, whom he erroneously considered as rather the author of his misfortunes than the guiltless sharer of them. 'I will not,' he thought, 'to please his fancies, lose the good-will of these kind monks, which may be one day useful to me. I have suffered enough by his preachments already, I trow. Little the wiser and much the poorer have they made me. No—no, Catharine and Clement may think as they will, but I will take the first opportunity to sneak back like a rated hound at the call of his master, submit to a plentiful course of harcloth and whipcord, disburse a lusty mulct, and become whole with the church again.'

More than a fortnight had passed since the glover had arrived at Ballough, and he began to wonder that he had not heard news of Catharine or of Henry Wynd, to whom he concluded the provost had communicated the plan and place of his retreat. He knew the stout smith dared not come up into the Clan Quhele country, on account of various feuds with the inhabitants, and with Eachin himself, while bearing the name of Conachar, but yet the glover thought Henry might have found means to send him a message, or a token, by some one of the various couriers who passed and repassed between the court and the headquarters of the Clan Quhele, in order to concert the terms of the impending combat, the march of the parties to Perth, and other particulars requiring previous adjustment. It was now the middle of March, and the fatal Palm Sunday was fast approaching.

Whilst time was thus creeping on, the exiled glover had not even once set eyes upon his former apprentice. The care that

was taken to attend to his wants and convenience in every respect showed that he was not forgotten, but yet, when he heard the chieftain's horn ringing through the woods, he usually made it a point to choose his walk in a different direction. One morning, however, he found himself unexpectedly in Eachin's close neighbourhood, with scarce leisure to avoid him, and thus it happened.

As Simon strolled pensively through a little silvan glade, surrounded on either side with tall forest trees, mixed with underwood, a white doe broke from the thicket, closely pursued by two deer greyhounds, one of which griped her haunch, the other her throat, and pulled her down within half a furlong of the glover, who was something startled at the suddenness of the incident. The near and piercing blast of a horn, and the baying of a slowhound, made Simon aware that the hunters were close behind, and on the trace of the deer. Hallooing and the sound of men running through the copse were heard close at hand. A moment's recollection would have satisfied Simon that his best way was to stand fast, or retire slowly, and leave it to Eachin to acknowledge his presence or not, as he should see cause. But his desire of shunning the young man had grown into a kind of instinct, and in the alarm of finding him so near, Simon hid himself in a bush of hazels mixed with holly, which altogether concealed him. He had hardly done so ere Eachin, rosy with exercise, dashed from the thicket into the open glade, accompanied by his foster-father, Torquil of the Oak. The latter, with equal strength and address, turned the struggling hind on her back, and holding her fore feet in his right hand, while he knelt on her body, offered his skene with the left to the young chief, that he might cut the animal's throat.

'It may not be, Torquil, do thine office, and take the assay thyself. I must not kill the likeness of my foster mother.'

This was spoken with a melancholy smile, while a tear at the same time stood in the speaker's eye. Torquil stared at his young chief for an instant, then drew his sharp wood-knife across the creature's throat with a cut so swift and steady that the weapon reached the back bone. Then rising on his feet, and again fixing a long piercing look on his chief, he said—'As much as I have done to that hind would I do to any living man whose ears could have heard my *dault* (foster son) so much as name a white doe, and couple the word with Hector's name!'

If Simon had no reason before to keep himself concealed, this speech of Torquil furnished him with a pressing one

'It cannot be concealed, father 'Torquil,' said Eachin, 'it will all out to the broad day.'

'What will out? what will to broad day?' asked Torquil in surprise

'It is the fatal secret,' thought Simon, 'and now, if this huge privy councillor cannot keep silence, I shall be made answerable, I suppose, for Eachin's disgrace having been blown abroad'

Thinking thus anxiously, he availed himself at the same time of his position to see as much as he could of what passed between the afflicted chieftain and his confidant, impelled by that spirit of curiosity which prompts us in the most momentous, as well as the most trivial, occasions of life, and which is sometimes found to exist in company with great personal fear

As Torquil listened to what Eachin communicated, the young man sank into his arms, and, supporting himself on his shoulder, concluded his confession by a whisper into his ear Torquil seemed to listen with such amazement as to make him incapable of crediting his ears As if to be certain that it was Eachin who spoke, he gradually roused the youth from his reclining posture, and, holding him up in some measure by a grasp on his shoulder, fixed on him an eye that seemed enlarged, and at the same time turned to stone, by the marvels he listened to And so wild waxed the old man's visage after he had heard the murmured communication, that Simon Glover apprehended he would cast the youth from him as a dishonoured thing, in which case he might have lighted among the very copse in which he lay concealed, and occasioned his discovery in a manner equally painful and dangerous But the passions of Torquil, who entertained for his foster-child even a double portion of that passionate fondness which always attends that connexion in the Highlands, took a different turn

'I believe it not,' he exclaimed, 'it is false of thy father's child, false of thy mother's son, falsest of my *dault*! I offer my gage to heaven and hell, and will maintain the combat with him that shall call it true! Thou hast been spellbound by an evil eye, my darling, and the fainting which you call cowardice is the work of magic. I remember the bat that struck the torch out on the hour that thou wert born — that hour of grief and of joy Cheer up, my beloved! Thou shalt with me to Iona, and the good St. Columbus, with the whole choir of

blessed saints and angels, who ever favoured thy race, shall take from thee the heart of the white doe and return that which they have stolen from thee.'

Eachin listened, with a look as if he would fain have believed the words of the comforter

'But, 'Torquil,' he said, 'supposing this might avail us, the fatal day approaches, and if I go to the lists, I dread me we shall be shamed.'

'It cannot be — it shall not!' said 'Torquil. 'Hell shall not prevail so far we will steep thy sword in holy water, place vervain, St. John's-wort, and rowan tree in thy crest. We will surround thee, I and thy eight brethren thou shalt be safe as in a castle.'

Again the youth helplessly muttered something, which, from the dejected tone in which it was spoken, Simon could not understand, while 'Torquil's deep tones in reply fell full and distinct upon his ear

'Yes, there may be a chance of withdrawing thee from the conflict. 'Thou art the youngest who is to draw blade. Now, hear me, and thou shalt know what it is to have a foster-father's love, and how far it exceeds the love even of kinsmen. The youngest on the indenture of the Clan Chattan is Ferquhard Day. His father slew mine, and the red blood is seething hot between us, I looked to Palm Sunday as the term that should cool it. But mark! Thou wouldst have thought that the blood in the veins of this Ferquhard Day and in mine would not have mingled had they been put into the same vessel; yet hath he cast the eyes of his love upon my only daughter Eva, the fairest of our maidens. Think with what feelings I heard the news. It was as if a wolf from the skirts of Farragon had said, "Give me thy child in wedlock, 'Torquil." My child thought not thus she loves Ferquhard, and weeps away her colour and strength in dread of the approaching battle. Let her give him but a sign of favour, and well I know he will forget kith and kin, forsake the field, and fly with her to the desert.'

'He, the youngest of the champions of Clan Chattan, being absent, I, the youngest of the Clan Quhele, may be excused from combat,' said Eachin, blushing at the mean chance of safety thus opened to him

'See now, my chief,' said 'Torquil, 'and judge my thoughts towards thee others might give thee their own lives and that of their sons — I sacrifice to thee the honour of my house.'

'My friend — my father,' repeated the chief, folding Torquil to his bosom, 'what a base wretch am I that have a spirit dastardly enough to avail myself of your sacrifice!'

'Speak not of that Green woods have ears. Let us back to the camp, and send our gillies for the venison Back, dogs, and follow at heel'

The slowhound, or lyme-dog, luckily for Simon, had drenched his nose in the blood of the deer, else he might have found the glover's lair in the thicket, but its more acute properties of scent being lost, it followed tranquilly with the gazehounds.

When the hunters were out of sight and hearing, the glover arose, greatly relieved by their departure, and began to move off in the opposite direction as fast as his age permitted His first reflection was on the fidelity of the foster-father.

'The wild mountain heart is faithful and true Yonder man is more like the giants in romaunts than a man of mould like ourselves, and yet Christians might take an example from him for his lealty A simple contrivance this, though, to finger a man from off their enemies' cheque, as if there would not be twenty of the wildcats ready to supply his place'

Thus thought the glover, not aware that the strictest proclamations were issued, prohibiting any of the two contending clans, their friends, allies, and dependants, from coming within fifty miles of Perth, during a week before and a week after the combat, which regulation was to be enforced by armed men.

So soon as our friend Simon arrived at the habitation of the herdsman, he found other news awaiting him They were brought by Father Clement, who came in a pilgrim's cloak, or dalmatic, ready to commence his return to the southward, and desirous to take leave of his companion in exile, or to accept him as a travelling companion

'But what,' said the citizen, 'has so suddenly induced you to return within the reach of danger?'

'Have you not heard,' said Father Clement, 'that, March and his English allies having retired into England before the Earl of Douglas, the good earl has applied himself to redress the evils of the commonwealth, and hath written to the court letters desiring that the warrant for the High Court of Commission against heresy be withdrawn, as a trouble to men's consciences, that the nomination of Henry of Wardlaw to be prelate of St Andrews be referred to the Parliament, with sundry other things pleasing to the Commons? Now, most of the nobles that are with the King at Perth, and with them Sn Patrick

Charters, your worthy provost, have declared for the proposals of the Douglas. The Duke of Albany hath agreed to them — whether from good-will or policy I know not. The good King is easily persuaded to mild and gentle courses. And thus are the jaw teeth of the oppressors dashed to pieces in their sockets, and the prey snatched from their ravening talons. Will you with me to the Lowlands, or do you abide here a little space?’

Niel Booshalloch saved his friend the trouble of reply.

‘He had the chief’s authority,’ he said, ‘for saying that Simon Glover should abide until the champions went down to the battle.’ In this answer the citizen saw something not quite consistent with his own perfect freedom of volition, but, he cared little for it at the time, as it furnished a good apology for not travelling along with the clergyman.

‘An exemplary man,’ he said to his friend Niel Booshalloch, as soon as Father Clement had taken leave — ‘a great scholar, and a great saint. It is a pity almost he is no longer in danger to be burned, as his sermon at the stake would convert thousands. O, Niel Booshalloch, Father Clement’s pile would be a sweet savouring sacrifice, and a beacon to all devout Christians! But what would the burning of a borrel ignorant burgess like me serve? Men offer not up old glove leather for incense, nor are beacons fed with undressed hides, I trow! Sooth to speak, I have too little learning and too much fear to get credit by the affair, and, therefore, I should, in our homely phrase, have both the scathe and the scorn.’

‘True for you,’ answered the herdsman.

CHAPTER XXX

WE must return to the characters of our dramatic narrative whom we left at Perth, when we accompanied the glover and his fair daughter to Kinfauns, and from that hospitable mansion traced the course of Simon to Loch Tay; and the Prince, as the highest personage, claims our immediate attention.

This rash and inconsiderate young man endured with some impatience his sequestered residence with the Lord High Constable, with whose company, otherwise in every respect satisfactory, he became dissatisfied, from no other reason than that he held in some degree the character of his warder. Incensed against his uncle and displeased with his father, he longed, not unnaturally, for the society of Sir John Ramorny, on whom he had been so long accustomed to throw himself for amusement, and, though he would have resented the imputation as an insult, for guidance and direction. He therefore sent him a summons to attend him, providing his health permitted, and directed him to come by water to a little pavilion in the High Constable's garden, which, like that of Sir John's own lodgings, ran down to the Tay. In renewing an intimacy so dangerous, Rothsay only remembered that he had been Sir John Ramorny's munificent friend; while Sir John, on receiving the invitation, only recollected, on his part, the capricious insults he had sustained from his patron, the loss of his hand, and the lightness with which he had treated the subject, and the readiness with which Rothsay had abandoned his cause in the matter of the bonnet-maker's slaughter. He laughed bitterly when he read the Prince's billet.

'Eviot,' he said, 'man a stout boat with six trusty men—trusty men, mark me—lose not a moment, and bid Dwining instantly come hither. Heaven smiles on us, my trusty friend,' he said to the mediciner. 'I was but beating my brains how to get access to this fickle boy, and here he sends to invite me.'

'Hem! I see the matter very clearly,' said Dwining, 'Heaven smiles on some untoward consequences—he! he! he!'

'No matter, the trap is ready, and it is baited, too, my friend, with what would lure the boy from a sanctuary, though a troop with drawn weapons waited him in the churchyard. Yet is it scarce necessary. His own weariness of himself would have done the job. Get thy matters ready—thou goest with us. Write to him, as I cannot, that we come instantly to attend his commands, and do it clerkly. He reads well, and that he owes to me.'

'He will be your valiance's debtor for more knowledge before he dies—he! he! he! But is your bargain sure with the Duke of Albany?'

'Enough to gratify my ambition, thy avarice, and the revenge of both. Aboard—aboard, and speedily, let Eviot throw in a few flasks of the choicest wine, and some cold baked meats.'

'But your arm, my lord, Sir John? Does it not pain you?'

'The throbbing of my heart silences the pain of my wound. It beats as it would burst my bosom.'

'Heaven forbid!' said Dwining, adding, in a low voice, 'It would be a strange sight if it should. I should like to dissect it, save that its stony case would spoil my best instruments.'

In a few minutes they were in the boat, while a speedy messenger carried the note to the Prince.

Rothsay was seated with the Constable, after their noontide repast. He was sullen and silent, and the Earl had just asked whether it was his pleasure that the table should be cleared, when a note, delivered to the Prince, changed at once his aspect.

'As you will,' he said, 'I go to the pavilion in the garden—always with permission of my Lord Constable—to receive my late master of the horse.'

'My lord!' said Lord Errol.

'Ay, my lord, must I ask permission twice?'

'No, surely, my lord,' answered the Constable, 'but has your Royal Highness recollected that Sir John Ramorny—'

'Has not the plague, I hope?' replied the Duke of Rothsay. 'Come, Errol, you would play the surly turnkey, but it is not in your nature, farewell for half an hour.'

'A new folly!' said Errol, as the Prince, flinging open a lattice of the ground-parlour in which they sat, stepped out into the

garden — 'a new folly, to call back that villain to his counsels. But he is infatuated'

The Prince, in the meantime, looked back, and said hastily — 'Your lordship's good housekeeping will afford us a flask or two of wine and a slight collation in the pavilion? I love the *al fresco* of the river'

The Constable bowed, and gave the necessary orders, so that Sir John found the materials of good cheer ready displayed, when, landing from his barge, he entered the pavilion

'It grieves my heart to see your Highness under restraint,' said Ramorny, with a well-executed appearance of sympathy.

'That grief of thine will grieve mine,' said the Prince 'I am sure here has Errol, and a right true-hearted lord he is, so tired me with grave looks, and something like grave lessons, that he has driven me back to thee, thou reprobate, from whom, as I expect nothing good, I may perhaps obtain something entertaining Yet, ere we say more, it was foul work, that upon the Fastern's Even, Ramorny I well hope thou gavest not aim to it'

'On my honour, my lord, a simple mistake of the brute Bonthron. I did but hint to him that a dry beating would be due to the fellow by whom I had lost a hand, and lo you, my knave makes a double mistake He takes one man for another, and instead of the baton he uses the axe'

'It is well that it went no farther Small matter for the bonnet-maker, but I had never forgiven you had the armourer fallen — there is not his match in Britain But I hope they hanged the villain high enough?'

'If thirty feet might serve,' replied Ramorny

'Pah! no more of him,' said Rothsay, 'his wretched name makes the good wine taste of blood. And what are the news in Perth, Ramorny? How stands it with the *bona robas* and the galliards?'

'Little galliardise stirring, my lord,' answered the knight 'All eyes are turned to the motions of the Black Douglas, who comes with five thousand chosen men to put us all to rights, as if he were bound for another Otterburn It is said he is to be lieutenant again It is certain many have declared for his faction'

'It is time, then, my feet were free,' said Rothsay, 'otherwise I may find a worse warder than Errol.'

'Ah, my lord' were you once away from this place, you might make as bold a head as Douglas'

'Ramorny,' said the Prince, gravely, 'I have but a confused remembrance of your once having proposed something horrible to me. Beware of such counsel! I would be free—I would have my person at my own disposal, but I will never levy arms against my father, nor those it pleases him to trust.'

'It was only for your Royal Highness's personal freedom that I was presuming to speak,' answered Ramorny. 'Were I in your Grace's place, I would get me into that good boat which hovers on the Tay, and drop quietly down to Fife, where you have many friends, and make free to take possession of Falkland. It is a royal castle, and though the King has bestowed it in gift on your uncle, yet surely, even if the grant were not subject to challenge, your Grace might make free with the residence of so near a relative.'

'He hath made free with mine,' said the Duke, 'as the stewartry of Renfrew can tell. But stay, Ramorny—hold, did I not hear Errol say that the Lady Marjory Douglas, whom they call Duchess of Rothsay, is at Falkland? I would neither dwell with that lady nor insult her by dislodging her.'

'The lady was there, my lord,' replied Ramorny, 'but I have sure advice that she is gone to meet her father.'

'Ha! to animate the Douglas against me? or perhaps to beg him to spare me, providing I come on my knees to her bed, as pilgrims say the emirs and amirals upon whom a Saracen soldan bestows a daughter in marriage are bound to do? Ramorny, I will act by the Douglas's own saying, "It is better to hear the lark sing than the mouse squeak."¹ I will keep both foot and hand from fetters.'

'No place fitter than Falkland,' replied Ramorny. 'I have enough of good yeomen to keep the place, and should your Highness wish to leave it, a brief ride reaches the sea in three directions.'

'You speak well. But we shall die of gloom yonder. Neither mirth, music, nor maidens—ha!' said the heedless Prince.

'Pardon me, noble Duke, but, though the Lady Marjory Douglas be departed, like an errant dame in romance, to implore succour of her doughty sire, there is, I may say, a lover, I am sure a younger, maiden, either presently at Falkland or who will soon be on the road thither. Your Highness has not forgotten the Fair Maid of Perth?'

'Forget the prettiest wench in Scotland! No—any more

¹ Implying that it was better to keep the forest than shut themselves up in fortified places.

than thou hast forgotten the hand that thou hadst in the Curfew Street onslaught on St Valentine's Eve'

'The hand that I *had*! Your Highness would say, the hand that I lost. As certain as I shall never regain it, Catharine Glover is, or will soon be, at Falkland. I will not flatter your Highness by saying she expects to meet you, in truth, she proposes to place herself under the protection of the Lady Marjory.'

'The little traitress,' said the Prince — 'she too to turn against me? She deserves punishment, Ramorny.'

'I trust your Grace will make her penance a gentle one,' replied the knight.

'Faith, I would have been her father confessor long ago, but I have ever found her coy.'

'Opportunity was lacking, my lord,' replied Ramorny, 'and time presses even now.'

'Nay, I am but too apt for a frolic, but my father —'

'He is personally safe,' said Ramorny, 'and as much at freedom as ever he can be, while your Highness —'

'Must brook fetters, conjugal or literal — I know it. Yonder comes Douglas, with his daughter in his hand, as haughty and as harsh-featured as himself, bating touches of age.'

'And at Falkland sits in solitude the fairest wench in Scotland,' said Ramorny. 'Here is penance and restraint, yonder is joy and freedom.'

'Thou hast prevailed, most sage counsellor,' replied Rothsay, 'but mark you, it shall be the last of my frolics.'

'I trust so,' replied Ramorny; 'for, when at liberty, you may make a good accommodation with your royal father.'

'I will write to him, Ramorny. Get the writing-materials. No, I cannot put my thoughts in words — do thou write.'

'Your Royal Highness forgets,' said Ramorny, pointing to his mutilated arm.

'Ah! that cursed hand of yours. What can we do?'

'So please your Highness,' answered his counsellor, 'if you would use the hand of the mediciner, Dwining — he writes like a clerk.'

'Hath he a hint of the circumstances? Is he possessed of them?'

'Fully,' said Ramorny; and, stepping to the window, he called Dwining from the boat.

He entered the presence of the Prince of Scotland, creeping as if he trode upon eggs, with downcast eyes, and a frame

that seemed shrunk up by a sense of awe produced by the occasion.

'There, fellow, are writing-materials I will make trial of you, thou know'st the case — place my conduct to my father in a fair light.'

Dwining sat down, and in a few minutes wrote a letter, which he handed to Sir John Ramorny

'Why, the devil has aided thee, Dwining,' said the knight 'Listen, my dear lord. "Respected father and liege sovereign — Know that important considerations induce me to take my departure from this your court, purposing to make my abode at Falkland, both as the seat of my dearest uncle Albany, with whom I know your Majesty would desire me to use all familiarity, and as the residence of one from whom I have been too long estranged, and with whom I haste to exchange vows of the closest affection from henceforward."'

The Duke of Rothsay and Ramorny laughed aloud, and the physician, who had listened to his own scroll as if it were a sentence of death, encouraged by their applause, raised his eyes, uttered faintly his chuckling note of 'He! he!' and was again grave and silent, as if afraid he had transgressed the bounds of reverent respect.

'Admirable!' said the Prince — 'admirable! The old man will apply all this to the Duchess, as they call her, of Rothsay! Dwining, thou shouldst be a *secretis* to his Holiness the Pope, who sometimes, it is said, wants a scribe that can make one word record two meanings I will subscribe it, and have the praise of the device.'

'And now, my lord,' said Ramorny, sealing the letter and leaving it behind, 'will you not to boat?'

'Not till my chamberlain attends with some clothes and necessaries, and you may call my sewer also.'

'My lord,' said Ramorny, 'time presses, and preparation will but excite suspicion. Your officers will follow with the mails to morrow. For to night, I trust my poor service may suffice to wait on you at table and chamber.'

'Nay, this time it is thou who forgets,' said the Prince, touching the wounded arm with his walking-rod. 'Recollect, man, thou canst neither carve a capon nor tie a point — a goodly sewer or valet of the mouth!'

Ramorny grinned with rage and pain, for his wound, though in a way of healing, was still highly sensitive, and even the pointing a finger towards it made him tremble.

‘Will your Highness now be pleased to take boat?’

‘Not till I take leave of the Lord Constable. Rothsay must not slip away, like a thief from a prison, from the house of Errol. Summon him hither.’

‘My Lord Duke,’ said Ramorny, ‘it may be dangerous to our plan.’

‘To the devil with danger, thy plan, and thyself! I must and will act to Errol as becomes us both.’

The Earl entered, agreeable to the Prince’s summons.

‘I gave you this trouble, my lord,’ said Rothsay, with the dignified courtesy which he knew so well how to assume, ‘to thank you for your hospitality and your good company. I can enjoy them no longer, as pressing affairs call me to Falkland.’

‘My lord,’ said the Lord High Constable, ‘I trust your Grace remembers that you are under ward.’

‘How! — under ward? If I am a prisoner, speak plainly, if not, I will take my freedom to depart.’

‘I would, my lord, your Highness would request his Majesty’s permission for this journey. There will be much displeasure.’

‘Mean you displeasure against yourself, my lord, or against me?’

‘I have already said your Highness lies in ward here, but if you determine to break it, I have no warrant — God forbid — to put force on your inclinations. I can but entreat your Highness, for your own sake —’

‘Of my own interests I am the best judge. Good evening to you, my lord.’

The wilful Prince stepped into the boat with Dwining and Ramorny, and, waiting for no other attendance, Eviot pushed off the vessel, which descended the Tay rapidly by the assistance of sail and oar and of the ebb-tide.

For some space the Duke of Rothsay appeared silent and moody, nor did his companions interrupt his reflections. He raised his head at length and said, ‘My father loves a jest, and when all is over he will take this frolic at no more serious rate than it deserves — a fit of youth, with which he will deal as he has with others. Yonder, my masters, shows the old hold of Kinfauns, frowning above the Tay. Now, tell me, John Ramorny, how thou hast dealt to get the Fair Maid of Perth out of the hands of yonder bull-headed provost, for Errol told me it was rumoured that she was under his protection.’

'Truly she was, my lord, with the purpose of being transferred to the patronage of the Duchess — I mean of the Lady Marjory of Douglas. Now, this beetle-headed provost, who is after all but a piece of blundering valiancy, has, like most such, a retainer of some slyness and cunning, whom he uses in all his dealings, and whose suggestions he generally considers as his own ideas. Whenever I would possess myself of a landward baron, I address myself to such a confidant, who, in the present case, is called Kitt Henshaw, an old skipper upon the Tay, and who, having in his time sailed as far as Campvere, holds with Sir Patrick Charteris the respect due to one who has seen foreign countries. This his agent I have made my own, and by his means have insinuated various apologies in order to postpone the departure of Catharine for Falkland.'

'But to what good purpose?'

'I know not if it is wise to tell your Highness, lest you should disapprove of my views. I meant the officers of the Commission for inquiry into heretical opinions should have found the Fair Maid at Kinfauns, for our beauty is a peevish, self-willed swerver from the church, and certes, I designed that the knight should have come in for his share of the fines and confiscations that were about to be inflicted. The monks were eager enough to be at him, seeing he hath had frequent disputes with them about the salmon-tithe.'

'But wherefore wouldst thou have ruined the knight's fortunes, and brought the beautiful young woman to the stake, perchance?'

'Pshaw, my Lord Duke! monks never burn pretty maidens. An old woman might have been in some danger, and as for my Lord Provost, as they call him, if they had clipped off some of his fat acres, it would have been some atonement for the needless brave he put on me in St. John's church.'

'Methinks, John, it was but a base revenge,' said Rothsay

'Rest ye contented, my lord. He that cannot right himself by the hand must use his head. Well, that chance was over by the tender-hearted Douglas's declaring in favour of tender conscience, and then, my lord, old Henshaw found no further objections to carrying the Fair Maid of Perth to Falkland, not to share the dulness of the Lady Marjory's society, as Sir Patrick Charteris and she herself doth opine, but to keep your Highness from tiring when we return from hunting in the park.'

There was again a long pause, in which the Prince seemed

to muse deeply At length he spoke 'Ramorny, I have a scruple in this matter, but if I name it to thee, the devil of sophistry, with which thou art possessed, will argue it out of me, as it has done many others This girl is the most beautiful, one excepted, whom I ever saw or knew, and I like her the more that she bears some features of — Elizabeth of Dunbar But she, I mean Catharine Glover, is contracted, and presently to be wedded, to Henry the armourer, a craftsman unequalled for skill, and a man-at-arms yet unmatched in the barrack 'To follow out this intrigue would do a good fellow too much wrong'

'Your Highness will not expect me to be very solicitous of Henry Smith's interest,' said Ramorny, looking at his wounded arm

'By St Andrew with his shored cross, this disaster of thine is too much harped upon, John Ramorny' Others are content with putting a finger into every man's pie, but thou must thrust in thy whole gory hand It is done, and cannot be undone, let it be forgotten'

'Nay, my lord, you allude to it more frequently than I,' answered the knight — 'in derision, it is true, while I — but I can be silent on the subject if I cannot forget it'

'Well, then, I tell thee that I have scruple about this intrigue Dost thou remember, when we went in a frolic to hear Father Clement preach, or rather to see this fair heretic, that he spoke as touchingly as a minstrel about the rich man taking away the poor man's only ewe lamb?'

'A great matter, indeed,' answered Sir John, 'that this churl's wife's eldest son should be fathered by the Prince of Scotland' How many earls would covet the like fate for their fair countesses? and how many that have had such good luck sleep not a grain the worse for it?'

'And if I might presume to speak,' said the mediciner, 'the ancient laws of Scotland assigned such a privilege to every feudal lord over his female vassals, though lack of spirit and love of money hath made many exchange it for gold.'

'I require no argument to urge me to be kind to a pretty woman, but this Catharine has been ever cold to me,' said the Prince

'Nay, my lord,' said Ramorny, 'if, young, handsome, and a prince, you know not how to make yourself acceptable to a fine woman, it is not for me to say more'

'And if it were not far too great audacity in me to speak again, I would say,' quoth the leech, 'that all Perth knows that

the Gow Chrom never was the maiden's choice, but fairly forced upon her by her father. I know for certain that she refused him repeatedly.'

'Nay, if thou canst assure us of that, the case is much altered,' said Rothsay. 'Vulcan was a smith as well as Harry Wynd, he would needs wed Venus, and our chronicles tell us what came of it.'

'Then long may Lady Venus live and be worshipped,' said Sir John Ramorny, 'and success to the gallant knight Mars who goes a-wooing to her goddess ship!'

The discourse took a gay and idle turn for a few minutes, but the Duke of Rothsay soon dropped it. 'I have left,' he said, 'yonder air of the prison house behind me, and yet my spirits scarce revive. I feel that drowsy, not unpleasing, yet melancholy, mood that comes over us when exhausted by exercise or satiated with pleasure. Some music now, stealing on the ear, yet not loud enough to make us lift the eye, were a treat for the gods.'

'Your Grace has but to speak your wishes, and the nymphs of the Tay are as favourable as the fair ones upon the shore. Hark! it is a lute.'

'A lute!' said the Duke of Rothsay, listening, 'it is, and rarely touched. I should remember that dying fall. Steer towards the boat from whence the music comes.'

'It is old Henshaw,' said Ramorny, 'working up the stream. How, skipper!'

The boatmen answered the hail, and drew up alongside of the Prince's barge.

'Oh, ho! my old friend!' said the Prince, recognising the figure as well as the appointments of the French glee-woman, Louise. 'I think I owe thee something for being the means of thy having a fright, at least, upon St. Valentine's Day. Into this boat with thee, lute, puppy dog, scrip and all, I will prefer thee to a lady's service who shall feed thy very cur on capons and canary.'

'I trust your Highness will consider——' said Ramorny.

'I will consider nothing but my pleasure, John. Pray, do thou be so complying as to consider it also.'

'Is it indeed to a lady's service you would promote me?' said the glee maiden. 'And where does she dwell?'

'At Falkland,' answered the Prince.

'Oh, I have heard of that great lady!' said Louise, 'and will you indeed prefer me to your right royal consort's service?'

'I will, by my honour — whenever I receive her as such Mark that reservation, John,' said he aside to Ramorny

The persons who were in the boat caught up the tidings, and, concluding a reconciliation was about to take place betwixt the royal couple, exhorted Louise to profit by her good fortune, and add herself to the Duchess of Rothsay's train. Several offered her some acknowledgment for the exercise of her talents

During this moment of delay, Ramorny whispered to Dwining, 'Make in, knave, with some objection. This addition is one too many. Rouse thy wits, while I speak a word with Henshaw'

'If I might presume to speak,' said Dwining, 'as one who have made my studies both in Spain and Arabia, I would say, my lord, that the sickness has appeared in Edinburgh, and that there may be risk in admitting this young wanderer into your Highness's vicinity'

'Ah! and what is it to thee,' said Rothsay, 'whether I choose to be poisoned by the pestilence or the 'pothecary? Must thou, too, needs thwart my humour?'

While the Prince thus silenced the remonstrances of Dwining, Sir John Ramorny had snatched a moment to learn from Henshaw that the removal of the Duchess of Rothsay from Falkland was still kept profoundly secret, and that Catharine Glover would arrive there that evening or the next morning, in expectation of being taken under the noble lady's protection

The Duke of Rothsay, deeply plunged in thought, received this intimation so coldly, that Ramorny took the liberty of remonstrating. 'This, my lord,' he said, 'is playing the spoiled child of fortune. You wish for liberty, it comes. You wish for beauty, it awaits you, with just so much delay as to render the boon more precious. Even your slightest desires seem a law to the Fates, for you desire music when it seems most distant, and the lute and song are at your hand. These things, so sent, should be enjoyed, else we are but like petted children, who break and throw from them the toys they have wept themselves sick for'

'To enjoy pleasure, Ramorny,' said the Prince, 'a man should have suffered pain, as it requires fasting to gain a good appetite. We, who can have all for a wish, little enjoy that all when we have possessed it. Seest thou yonder thick cloud, which is about to burst to rain? It seems to stifle me — the waters look dark and lurid — the shores have lost their beautiful form —'

'My lord, forgive your servant,' said Ramorny 'You indulge a powerful imagination, as an unskilful horseman permits a fiery steed to rear until he falls back on his master and crushes him. I pray you shake off this lethargy. Shall the glee-maiden make some music?'

'Let her, but it must be melancholy. all mirth would at this moment jar on my ear.'

The maiden sung a melancholy dirge in Norman French, the words, of which the following is a imitation, were united to a tune as doleful as they are themselves —

Yet, thou mayst sigh,
And look once more a' all around,
At stream and bank, and sky and ground,
Thy life its final course has found,
And thou must die

Yes, lay thee down,
And while thy struggling pulse is flutter,
Bid the grey monk his soul mass mutter,
And the deep bell its death tone utter —
Thy life is gone

Be not afraid
'Tis but a pang, and then a thrill,
A fever fit, and then a chill,
And then an end of human ill,
For thou art dead

The Prince made no observation on the music, and the maiden, at Ramorny's beck, went on from time to time with her minstrel craft, until the evening sunk down into rain, first soft and gentle, at length in great quantities, and accompanied by a cold wind. There was neither cloak nor covering for the Prince, and he sullenly rejected that which Ramorny offered.

'It is not for Rothsay to wear your cast garments, Sir John, this melted snow, which I feel pierce me to the very marrow, I am now encountering by your fault. Why did you presume to put off the boat without my servants and apparel?'

Ramorny did not attempt an exculpation, for he knew the Prince was in one of those humours, when to enlarge upon a grievance was more pleasing to him than to have his mouth stopped by any reasonable apology. In sullen silence, or amid unsuppressed chiding, the boat arrived at the fishing village of Newburgh. The party landed, and found horses in readiness, which, indeed, Ramorny had long since provided for the occasion. Their quality underwent the Prince's bitter sarcasm,

expressed to Ramorny sometimes by direct words, oftener by bitter gibes. At length they were mounted, and rode on through the closing night and the falling rain, the Prince leading the way with reckless haste. The glee-maiden, mounted by his express order, attended them, and well for her that, accustomed to severe weather, and exercise both on foot and horseback, she supported as firmly as the men the fatigues of the nocturnal ride. Ramorny was compelled to keep at the Prince's rein, being under no small anxiety lest, in his wayward fit, he might ride off from him entirely, and, taking refuge in the house of some loyal baron, escape the snare which was spread for him. He therefore suffered inexpressibly during the ride, both in mind and in body.

At length the forest of Falkland received them, and a glimpse of the moon showed the dark and huge tower, an appendage of royalty itself, though granted for a season to the Duke of Albany. On a signal given the drawbridge fell. Torches glared in the courtyard, menials attended, and the Prince, assisted from horseback, was ushered into an apartment, where Ramorny waited on him, together with Dwining, and entreated him to take the leech's advice. The Duke of Rothsay repulsed the proposal, haughtily ordered his bed to be prepared, and having stood for some time shivering in his dank garments beside a large blazing fire, he retired to his apartment without taking leave of any one.

'You see the peevish humour of this childish boy, now,' said Ramorny to Dwining, 'can you wonder that a servant who has done so much for him as I have should be tired of such a master?'

'No, truly,' said Dwining, 'that and the promised earldom of Lindores would shake any man's fidelity. But shall we commence with him this evening? He has, if eye and cheek speak true, the foundation of a fever within him, which will make our work easy, while it will seem the effect of nature.'

'It is an opportunity lost,' said Ramorny; 'but we must delay our blow till he has seen this beauty, Catharine Glover. She may be hereafter a witness that she saw him in good health, and master of his own motions, a brief space before — you understand me?'

Dwining nodded assent, and added —

'There is no time lost, for there is little difficulty in blighting a flower exhausted from having been made to bloom too soon.'

CHAPTER XXXI

Ah me ! in sooth he was a shameless wight,
Sore given to revel and ungodly glee
Few earthly things found favour in his sight,
Save concubines and carnal companie,
And flaunting wassailers of high and low degree.

BYRON

WITH the next morning the humour of the Duke of Rothsay was changed. He complained, indeed, of pain and fever, but they rather seemed to stimulate than to overwhelm him. He was familiar with Ramorny, and though he said nothing on the subject of the preceding night, it was plain he remembered what he desired to obliterate from the memory of his followers — the ill-humour he had then displayed. He was civil to every one, and jested with Ramorny on the subject of Catharine's arrival.

'How surprised will the pretty prude be at seeing herself in a family of men, when she expects to be admitted amongst the hoods and pinnars of Dame Marjory's waiting-women ! Thou hast not many of the tender sex in thy household, I take it, Ramorny ?'

'Faith, none except the minstrel wench, but a household drudge or two whom we may not dispense with. By the way, she is anxiously inquiring after the mistress your Highness promised to prefer her to. Shall I dismiss her, to hunt for her new mistress at leisure ?'

'By no means, she will serve to amuse Catharine. And, hark you, were it not well to receive that coy jillet with something of a mumming ?'

'How mean you, my lord ?'

'Thou art dull, man. We will not disappoint her, since she expects to find the Duchess of Rothsay. I will be Duke and Duchess in my own person.'

'Still I do not comprehend.'

'No one so dull as a wit,' said the Prince, 'when he does not hit off the scent at once. My Duchess, as they call her, has been in as great a hurry to run away from Falkland as I to come hither. We have both left our apparel behind. There is as much female trumpery in the wardrobe adjoining to my sleeping-room as would equip a whole carnival. Look you, I will play Dame Marjory, disposed on this day-bed here with a mourning veil and a wreath of willow, to show my forsaken plight, thou, John, wilt look starch and stiff enough for her Galwegian maid of honour, the Countess Hermigild; and Dwining shall present the old Hecate, her nurse — only she hath more beard on her upper lip than Dwining on his whole face, and skull to boot. He should have the commodity of a beard to set her forth conformably. Get thy kitchen drudges, and what passable pages thou hast with thee, to make my women of the bedroom. Hearest thou? about it instantly.'

Ramorny hastened into the ante-room, and told Dwining the Prince's device.

'Do thou look to humour the fool,' he said, 'I care not how little I see him, knowing what is to be done.'

'Trust all to me,' said the physician, shrugging his shoulders. 'What sort of a butcher is he that can cut the lamb's throat, yet is afraid to hear it bleat?'

'Tush, fear not my constancy. I cannot forget that he would have cast me into the cloister with as little regard as if he threw away the truncheon of a broken lance. Begone — yet stay, ere you go to arrange this silly pageant, something must be settled to impose on the thick-witted Charteris. He is like enough, should he be left in the belief that the Duchess of Rothsay is still here, and Catharine Glover in attendance on her, to come down with offers of service, and the like, when, as I need scarce tell thee, his presence would be inconvenient. Indeed, this is the more likely, that some folks have given a warmer name to the iron-headed knight's great and tender patronage of this damsel.'

'With that hint, let me alone to deal with him. I will send him such a letter, that for this month he shall hold himself as ready for a journey to hell as to Falkland. Can you tell me the name of the Duchess's confessor?'

'Waltheof, a grey friar.'

'Enough — then here I start.'

In a few minutes, for he was a clerk of rare celerity, Dwining finished a letter, which he placed in Ramorny's hand.

'This is admirable, and would have made thy fortune with Rothsay. I think I should have been too jealous to trust thee in his household, save that his day is closed.'

'Read it aloud,' said Dwining, 'that we may judge if it goes trippingly off.' And Ramorny read as follows — 'By command of our high and mighty Princess Marjory, Duchess of Rothsay, and so forth, we Waltheof, unworthy brother of the order of St. Francis, do thee, Sir Patrick Charteris, knight, of Kinfauns, to know, that her Highness marvels much at the temerity with which you have sent to her presence a woman of whose fame she can judge but lightly, seeing she hath made her abode, without any necessity, for more than a week in thine own castle, without company of any other female, saving menials, of which foul cohabitation the savour is gone up through Fife, Angus, and Perthshire. Nevertheless, her Highness, considering the case as one of human frailty, hath not caused this wanton one to be scourged with nettles, or otherwise to do penance, but, as two good brethren of the convent of Lindores, the Fathers Thickskull and Dundermore, have been summoned up to the Highlands upon an especial call, her Highness hath committed to their care this maiden Catharine, with charge to convey her to her father, whom she states to be residing beside Loch Tay, under whose protection she will find a situation more fitting her qualities and habits than the Castle of Falkland, while her Highness the Duchess of Rothsay abides there. She hath charged the said reverend brothers so to deal with the young woman as may give her a sense of the sin of incontinence, and she commendeth thee to confession and penitence. — Signed, Waltheof, by command of an high and mighty Princess', and so forth.

When he had finished, 'Excellent — excellent!' Ramorny exclaimed. 'This unexpected rebuff will drive Charteris mad! He hath been long making a sort of homage to this lady, and to find himself suspected of incontinence, when he was expecting the full credit of a charitable action, will altogether confound him, and, as thou say'st, it will be long enough ere he come hither to look after the damsel or do honour to the dame. But away to thy pageant, while I prepare that which shall close the pageant for ever.'

It was an hour before noon, when Catharine, escorted by old Henshaw and a groom of the Knight of Kinfauns, arrived before the lordly tower of Falkland. The broad banner which was displayed from it bore the arms of Rothsay, the servants

who appeared wore the colours of the Prince's household, all confirming the general belief that the Duchess still resided there. Catharine's heart throbbed, for she had heard that the Duchess had the pride as well as the high courage of the house of Douglas, and felt uncertain touching the reception she was to experience. On entering the castle, she observed that the train was smaller than she had expected, but, as the Duchess lived in close retirement, she was little surprised at this. In a species of ante-room she was met by a little old woman, who seemed bent double with age, and supported herself upon an ebony staff.

'Truly thou art welcome, fair daughter,' said she, saluting Catharine, 'and, as I may say, to an afflicted house, and I trust (once more saluting her) thou wilt be a consolation to my precious and right royal daughter the Duchess. Sit thee down, my child, till I see whether my lady be at leisure to receive thee. Ah, my child, thou art very lovely indeed, if Our Lady hath given to thee a soul to match with so fair a body.'

With that the counterfeit old woman crept into the next apartment, where she found Rothsay in the masquerading habit he had prepared, and Ramorny, who had evaded taking part in the pageant, in his ordinary attire.

'Thou art a precious rascal, sir doctor,' said the Prince, 'by my honour, I think thou couldst find in thy heart to play out the whole play thyself, lover's part and all.'

'If it were to save your Highness trouble,' said the leech, with his usual subdued laugh.

'No — no,' said Rothsay, 'I'll never need thy help, man, and tell me now, how look I, thus disposed on the couch — languishing and ladylike, ha?'

'Something too fine-complexioned and soft-featured for the Lady Marjory of Douglas, if I may presume to say so,' said the leech.

'Away, villain, and marshal in this fair frost-piece — fear not she will complain of my effeminacy; and thou, Ramorny, away also.'

As the knight left the apartment by one door, the fictitious old woman ushered in Catharine Glover by another. The room had been carefully darkened to twilight, so that Catharine saw the apparently female figure stretched on the couch without the least suspicion.

'Is that the maiden?' asked Rothsay, in a voice naturally sweet, and now carefully modulated to a whispering tone. 'Let her approach, Griselda, and kiss our hand.'

The supposed nurse led the trembling maiden forward to the side of the couch, and signed to her to kneel. Catharine did so, and kissed with much devotion and simplicity the gloved hand which the counterfeit duchess extended to her.

'Be not afraid,' said the same musical voice, 'in me you only see a melancholy example of the vanity of human greatness, happy those, my child, whose rank places them beneath the storms of state.'

While he spoke, he put his arms around Catharine's neck and drew her towards him, as if to salute her in token of welcome. But the kiss was bestowed with an earnestness which so much overacted the part of the fair patroness, that Catharine, concluding the Duchess had lost her senses, screamed aloud.

'Peace, fool! it is I — David of Rothsay.'

Catharine looked around her, the nurse was gone, and the Duke tearing off his veil, she saw herself in the power of a daring young libertine.

'Now be present with me, Heaven!' she said, 'and Thou wilt, if I forsake not myself.'

As this resolution darted through her mind, she repressed her disposition to scream, and, as far as she might, strove to conceal her fear.

'The jest hath been played,' she said, with as much firmness as she could assume, 'may I entreat that your Highness will now unhand me?' for he still kept hold of her arm.

'Nay, my pretty captive, struggle not — why should you fear?'

'I do not struggle, my lord. As you are pleased to detain me, I will not, by striving, provoke you to use me ill, and give pain to yourself, when you have time to think.'

'Why, thou traitress, thou hast held me captive for months,' said the Prince, 'and wilt thou not let me hold thee for a moment?'

'This were gallantry, my lord, were it in the streets of Perth, where I might listen or escape as I listed, it is tyranny here.'

'And if I did let thee go, whither wouldst thou fly?' said Rothsay. 'The bridges are up, the portcullis down, and the men who follow me are strangely deaf to a peevish maiden's squalls. Be kind, therefore, and you shall know what it is to oblige a prince.'

'Unloose me, then, my lord, and hear me appeal from thyself to thyself, from Rothsay to the Prince of Scotland. I am

the daughter of an humble but honest citizen. I am, I may wellnigh say, the spouse of a brave and honest man. If I have given your Highness any encouragement for what you have done, it has been unintentional. Thus forewarned, I entreat you to forego your power over me, and suffer me to depart. Your Highness can obtain nothing from me, save by means equally unworthy of knighthood or manhood.'

'You are bold, Catharine,' said the Prince, 'but neither as a knight nor a man can I avoid accepting a defiance. I must teach you the risk of such challenges.'

While he spoke, he attempted to throw his arms again around her, but she eluded his grasp, and proceeded in the same tone of firm decision.

'My strength, my lord, is as great to defend myself in an honourable strife as yours can be to assail me with a most dishonourable purpose. Do not shame yourself and me by putting it to the combat. You may stun me with blows, or you may call aid to overpower me, but otherwise you will fail of your purpose.'

'What a brute you would make me!' said the Prince. 'The force I would use is no more than excuses women in yielding to their own weakness.'

He sat down in some emotion.

'Then keep it,' said Catharine, 'for those women who desire such an excuse. My resistance is that of the most determined mind which love of honour and fear of shame ever inspired. Alas! my lord, could you succeed, you would but break every bond between me and life, between yourself and honour. I have been trained fraudulently here, by what decoys I know not; but were I to go dishonoured hence, it would be to denounce the destroyer of my happiness to every quarter of Europe. I would take the palmer's staff in my hand, and wherever chivalry is honoured, or the word Scotland has been heard, I would proclaim the heir of a hundred kings, the son of the godly Robert Stuart, the heir of the heroic Bruce, a truthless, faithless man, unworthy of the crown he expects and of the spurs he wears. Every lady in wide Europe would hold your name too foul for her lips, every worthy knight would hold you a baffled, forsworn catiff, false to the first vow of arms, the protection of woman and the defence of the feeble.'

Rothsay resumed his seat, and looked at her with a countenance in which resentment was mingled with admiration. 'You

forget to whom you speak, maiden Know, the distinction I have offered you is one for which hundreds whose trains you are born to bear would feel gratitude.'

'Once more, my lord,' resumed Catharine, 'keep these favours for those by whom they are prized, or rather reserve your time and your health for other and nobler pursuits — for the defence of your country and the happiness of your subjects Alas, my lord, how willingly would an exulting people receive you for their chief! How gladly would they close around you, did you show desire to head them against the oppression of the mighty, the violence of the lawless, the seduction of the vicious, and the tyranny of the hypocrite!'

The Duke of Rothsay, whose virtuous feelings were as easily excited as they were evanescent, was affected by the enthusiasm with which she spoke. 'Forgive me if I have alarmed you, maiden,' he said, 'thou art too noble-minded to be the toy of passing pleasure, for which my mistake destined thee, and I, even were thy birth worthy of thy noble spirit and transcendent beauty, have no heart to give thee, for by the homage of the heart only should such as thou be wooed. But my hopes have been blighted, Catharine the only woman I ever loved has been torn from me in the very wantonness of policy, and a wife imposed on me whom I must ever detest, even had she the loveliness and softness which alone can render a woman amiable in my eyes. My health is fading even in early youth, and all that is left for me is to snatch such flowers as the short passage from life to the grave will now present. Look at my hectic cheek, feel, if you will, my intermitting pulse, and pity me and excuse me if I, whose rights as a prince and as a man have been trampled upon and usurped, feel occasional indifference towards the rights of others, and indulge a selfish desire to gratify the wish of the passing moment.'

'Oh, my lord!' exclaimed Catharine, with the enthusiasm which belonged to her character — 'I will call you my dear lord, for dear must the heir of Bruce be to every child of Scotland — let me not, I pray, hear you speak thus! Your glorious ancestor endured exile, persecution, the night of famine, and the day of unequal combat, to free his country, do you practise the like self denial to free yourself. Tear yourself from those who find their own way to greatness smoothed by feeding your follies. Distrust yon dark Ramorny! You know it not, I am sure — you could not know, but the wretch who could urge the daughter to courses of shame by threatening

the life of the aged father is capable of all that is vile, all that is treacherous !

‘Did Ramorny do this?’ said the Prince.

‘He did indeed, my lord, and he dares not deny it.’

‘It shall be looked to,’ answered the Duke of Rothsay. ‘I have ceased to love him, but he has suffered much for my sake, and I must see his services honourably requited’

‘His services ! Oh, my lord, if chronicles speak true, such services brought Troy to ruins and gave the infidels possession of Spain’

‘Hush, maiden — speak within compass, I pray you,’ said the Prince, rising up, ‘our conference ends here.’

‘Yet one word, my Lord Duke of Rothsay,’ said Catharine, with animation, while her beautiful countenance resembled that of an admonitory angel ‘I cannot tell what impels me to speak thus boldly, but the fire burns within me, and will break out Leave this castle without an hour’s delay ; the air is unwholesome for you Dismiss this Ramorny before the day is ten minutes older, his company is most dangerous’

‘What reason have you for saying this?’

‘None in especial,’ answered Catharine, abashed at her own eagerness — ‘none, perhaps, excepting my fears for your safety.’

‘To vague fears the heir of Bruce must not listen. What, ho ! who waits without?’

Ramorny entered, and bowed low to the Duke and to the maiden, whom, perhaps, he considered as likely to be preferred to the post of favourite sultana, and therefore entitled to a courteous obeisance

‘Ramorny,’ said the Prince, ‘is there in the household any female of reputation who is fit to wait on this young woman till we can send her where she may desire to go?’

‘I fear,’ replied Ramorny, ‘if it displease not your Highness to hear the truth, your household is indifferently provided in that way, and that, to speak the very verity, the glee-maiden is the most decorous amongst us’

‘Let her wait upon this young person, then, since better may not be. And take patience, maiden, for a few hours’

Catharine retired

‘So, my lord, part you so soon from the Fair Maid of Perth? This is, indeed, the very wantonness of victory’

‘There is neither victory nor defeat in the case,’ returned the Prince, drily ‘The girl loves me not, nor do I love her well enough to torment myself concerning her scruples.’

'The chaste Malcolm the Maiden revived in one of his descendants!' said Ramorny

'Favour me, sir, by a truce to your wit, or by choosing a different subject for its career. It is noon, I believe, and you will oblige me by commanding them to serve up dinner.'

Ramorny left the room, but Rothsay thought he discovered a smile upon his countenance, and to be the subject of this man's satire gave him no ordinary degree of pain. He summoned, however, the knight to his table, and even admitted Dwining to the same honour. The conversation was of a lively and dissolute cast, a tone encouraged by the Prince, as if designing to counterbalance the gravity of his morals in the morning, which Ramorny, who was read in old chronicles, had the boldness to liken to the continence of Scipio.

The banquet, notwithstanding the Duke's indifferent health, was protracted in idle wantonness far beyond the rules of temperance, and, whether owing simply to the strength of the wine which he drank, or the weakness of his constitution, or, as it is probable, because the last wine which he quaffed had been adulterated by Dwining, it so happened that the Prince, towards the end of the repast, fell into a lethargic sleep, from which it seemed impossible to rouse him. Sir John Ramorny and Dwining carried him to his chamber, accepting no other assistance than that of another person, whom we will afterwards give name to.

Next morning, it was announced that the Prince was taken ill of an infectious disorder, and, to prevent its spreading through the household, no one was admitted to wait on him save his late master of horse, the physician Dwining, and the domestic already mentioned, one of whom seemed always to remain in the apartment, while the others observed a degree of precaution respecting their intercourse with the rest of the family, so strict as to maintain the belief that he was dangerously ill of an infectious disorder.

'How else hadst thou been decoyed hither? Poor woodcock, thou art snared!' answered the murderer.

With these words, the door shut, the bolts resounded, and the unhappy Prince was left to darkness, solitude, and misery.

'Oh, my father!—my prophetic father!' 'The staff I leaned on has indeed proved a spear!' We will not dwell on the subsequent hours, nay days, of bodily agony and mental despair.

But it was not the pleasure of Heaven that so great a crime should be perpetrated with impunity.

Catharine Glover and the glee-woman, neglected by the other inmates, who seemed to be engaged with the tidings of the Prince's illness, were, however, refused permission to leave the castle until it should be seen how this alarming disease was to terminate, and whether it was actually an infectious sickness. Forced on each other's society, the two desolate women became companions, if not friends, and the union drew somewhat closer when Catharine discovered that this was the same female minstrel on whose account Henry Wynd had fallen under her displeasure. She now heard his complete vindication, and listened with ardour to the praises which Louise heaped on her gallant protector. On the other hand, the minstrel, who felt the superiority of Catharine's station and character, willingly dwelt upon a theme which seemed to please her, and recorded her gratitude to the stout smith in the little song of 'Bold and True,' which was long a favourite in Scotland.

Oh, bold and true,
In bonnet blue,
That fear or falsehood never knew,
Whose heart was loyal to his word,
Whose hand was faithful to his sword —
Seek Europe wide from sea to sea,
But bonny blue-cap still for me!

I've seen Almain's proud champions prance,
Have seen the gallant knights of France,
Unrival'd with the sword and lance,
Have seen the sons of England true,
Wield the brown bill and bend the yew
Search France the fair, and England free,
But bonny blue-cap still for me!

In short, though Louise's disreputable occupation would have been in other circumstances an objection to Catharine's voluntarily frequenting her company, yet, forced together as they now were, she found her a humble and accommodating companion.

They lived in this manner for four or five days, and, in order

to avoid as much as possible the gaze, and perhaps the incivility, of the menials in the offices, they prepared their food in their own apartment. In the absolutely necessary intercourse with domestics, Louise, more accustomed to expedients, bolder by habit, and desirous to please Catharine, willingly took on herself the trouble of getting from the pantler the materials of their slender meal, and of arranging it with the dexterity of her country.

The glee-woman had been abroad for this purpose upon the sixth day, a little before noon, and the desire of fresh air, or the hope to find some sallad or pot-herbs, or at least an early flower or two, with which to deck their board, had carried her into the small garden appertaining to the castle. She re-entered her apartment in the tower with a countenance pale as ashes, and a frame which trembled like an aspen leaf. Her terror instantly extended itself to Catharine, who could hardly find words to ask what new misfortune had occurred.

'Is the Duke of Rothsay dead?'

'Worse! they are starving him alive.'

'Madness, woman!'

'No—no—no—no!' said Louise, speaking under her breath, and huddling her words so thick upon each other that Catharine could hardly catch the sense. 'I was seeking for flowers to dress your pottage, because you said you loved them yesterday, my poor little dog, thrusting himself into a thicket of yew and holly bushes that grow out of some old ruins close to the castle wall, came back whining and howling. I crept forward to see what might be the cause—and, oh! I heard a groaning as of one in extreme pain, but so faint, that it seemed to arise out of the very depth of the earth. At length, I found it proceeded from a small rent in the wall, covered with ivy, and when I laid my ear close to the opening, I could hear the Prince's voice distinctly say, "It cannot now last long", and then it sunk away in something like a prayer.'

'Gracious Heaven! did you speak to him?'

'I said, "Is it you, my lord?" and the answer was, "Who mocks me with that title?" I asked him if I could help him, and he answered with a voice I shall never forget, "Food—food! I die of famine!" So I came hither to tell you. What is to be done? Shall we alarm the house?'

'Alas! that were more likely to destroy than to aid him,' said Catharine.

'And what then shall we do?' said Louise.

CHAPTER XXXII

In winter's tedious nights, sit by the fire,
With good old folks, and let them tell thee tales
Of woful ages, long ago betid
And, ere thou bid good-night, to quit their grief,
Tell thou the lamentable fall of me

King Richard II Act V. Scene I

FAR different had been the fate of the misguided heir of Scotland from that which was publicly given out in the town of Falkland. His ambitious uncle had determined on his death, as the means of removing the first and most formidable barrier betwixt his own family and the throne. James, the younger son of the King, was a mere boy, who might at more leisure be easily set aside. Ramorny's views of aggrandisement, and the resentment which he had latterly entertained against his master, made him a willing agent in young Rothsay's destruction. Dwining's love of gold, and his native malignity of disposition, rendered him equally forward. It had been resolved, with the most calculating cruelty, that all means which might leave behind marks of violence were to be carefully avoided, and the extinction of life suffered to take place of itself, by privation of every kind acting upon a frail and impaired constitution. The Prince of Scotland was not to be murdered, as Ramorny had expressed himself on another occasion, he was only to cease to exist.

Rothsay's bedchamber in the Tower of Falkland was well adapted for the execution of such a horrible project. A small, narrow staircase, scarce known to exist, opened from thence by a trap-door to the subterranean dungeons of the castle, through a passage by which the feudal lord was wont to visit, in private and in disguise, the inhabitants of those miserable regions. By this staircase the villains conveyed the insensible Prince to the lowest dungeon of the castle, so deep in the bowels of the earth, that no cries or groans, it was supposed, could possibly be heard, while the strength of its door and fastenings must for a

long time have defied force, even if the entrance could have been discovered. Bonthron, who had been saved from the gallows for the purpose, was the willing agent of Ramorny's unparalleled cruelty to his misled and betrayed patron.

This wretch revisited the dungeon at the time when the Prince's lethargy began to wear off, and when, awaking to sensation, he felt himself deadly cold, unable to move, and oppressed with fetters, which scarce permitted him to stir from the dank straw on which he was laid. His first idea was that he was in a fearful dream, his next brought a confused augury of the truth. He called, shouted, yelled at length in frenzy, but no assistance came, and he was only answered by the vaulted roof of the dungeon. The agent of hell heard these agonizing screams, and deliberately reckoned them against the taunts and reproaches with which Rothsay had expressed his instinctive aversion to him. When, exhausted and hopeless, the unhappy youth remained silent, the savage resolved to present himself before the eyes of his prisoner. The locks were drawn, the chain fell, the Prince raised himself as high as his fetters permitted, a red glare, against which he was fain to shut his eyes, streamed through the vault, and when he opened them again, it was on the ghastly form of one whom he had reason to think dead. He sunk back in horror. 'I am judged and condemned,' he exclaimed, 'and the most abhorred fiend in the infernal regions is sent to torment me!'

'I live, my lord,' said Bonthron, 'and that you may live and enjoy life, be pleased to sit up and eat your victuals.'

'Free me from these irons,' said the Prince, 'release me from this dungeon, and, dog as thou art, thou shalt be the richest man in Scotland.'

'If you would give me the weight of your shackles in gold,' said Bonthron, 'I would rather see the iron on you than have the treasure myself! But look up, you were wont to love delicate fare — behold how I have catered for you.' The wretch, with fiendish glee, unfolded a piece of raw hide covering the bundle which he bore under his arm, and, passing the light to and fro before it, showed the unhappy Prince a bull's head recently hewn from the trunk, and known in Scotland as the certain signal of death. He placed it at the foot of the bed, or rather lair, on which the Prince lay. 'Be moderate in your food,' he said, 'it is like to be long ere thou getst another meal.'

'Tell me but one thing, wretch,' said the Prince. 'Does Ramorny know of this practice?'

'I know not yet,' said Catharine, prompt and bold on occasions of moment, though yielding to her companion in ingenuity of resource on ordinary occasions — 'I know not yet, but something we will do the blood of Bruce shall not die unaided.'

So saying, she seized the small cruise which contained their soup, and the meat of which it was made, wrapped some thin cakes which she had baked into the fold of her plaid, and, beckoning her companion to follow with a vessel of milk, also part of their provisions, she hastened towards the garden.

'So, our fair vestal is stirring abroad?' said the only man she met, who was one of the menials; but Catharine passed on without notice or reply, and gained the little garden without farther interruption.

Louise indicated to her a heap of ruins, which, covered with underwood, was close to the castle-wall. It had probably been originally a projection from the building, and the small fissure, which communicated with the dungeon, contrived for air, had terminated within it. But the aperture had been a little enlarged by decay, and admitted a dim ray of light to its recesses, although it could not be observed by those who visited the place with torch-light aids.

'Here is dead silence,' said Catharine, after she had listened attentively for a moment. 'Heaven and earth, he is gone!'

'We must risk something,' said her companion, and ran her fingers over the strings of her guitar.

A sigh was the only answer from the depth of the dungeon Catharine then ventured to speak. 'I am here, my lord — I am here, with food and drink.'

'Ha! Ramorny! The jest comes too late, I am dying,' was the answer.

'His brain is turned, and no wonder,' thought Catharine, 'but whilst there is life, there may be hope.'

'It is I, my lord, Catharine Glover. I have food, if I could pass it safely to you.'

'Heaven bless thee, maiden! I thought the pain was over, but it glows again within me at the name of food.'

'The food is here, but how — ah how can I pass it to you? the chink is so narrow, the wall is so thick! Yet there is a remedy — I have it. Quick, Louise, cut me a willow bough, the tallest you can find.'

The glee-maiden obeyed, and, by means of a cleft in the top of the wand, Catharine transmitted several morsels of the soft

cakes, soaked in broth, which served at once for food and for drink.

The unfortunate young man ate little, and with difficulty, but prayed for a thousand blessings on the head of his comforter. 'I had destined thee to be the slave of my vices,' he said, 'and yet thou triest to become the preserver of my life! But away, and save thyself.'

'I will return with food as I shall see opportunity,' said Catharine, just as the glee maiden plucked her sleeve and desired her to be silent and stand close.

Both couched among the ruins, and they heard the voices of Ramorny and the mediciner in close conversation.

'He is stronger than I thought,' said the former, in a low, croaking tone. 'How long held out Dalwolsy, when the knight of Liddesdale prisoned him in his castle of Hermitage?'

'For a fortnight,' answered Dwining, 'but he was a strong man, and had some assistance by grain which fell from a granary above his prison house.'

'Were it not better end the matter more speedily? The Black Douglas comes this way. He is not in Albany's secret. He will demand to see the Prince, and all *must* be over ere he comes.'

They passed on in their dark and fatal conversation.

'Now gain we the tower,' said Catharine to her companion, when she saw they had left the garden. 'I had a plan of escape for myself, I will turn it into one of rescue for the Prince. The dey-woman enters the castle about vesper time, and usually leaves her cloak in the passage as she goes into the pantler's office with the milk. Take thou the cloak, muffle thyself close, and pass the warder boldly, he is usually drunken at that hour, and thou wilt go as the dey-woman unchallenged through gate and along bridge, if thou bear thyself with confidence. Then away to meet the Black Douglas, he is our nearest and only aid.'

'But,' said Louise, 'is he not that terrible lord who threatened me with shame and punishment?'

'Believe it,' said Catharine, 'such as thou or I never dwelt an hour in the Douglas's memory, either for good or evil. Tell him that his son-in-law, the Prince of Scotland, dies — treacherously famished — in Falkland Castle, and thou wilt merit not pardon only, but reward.'

'I care not for reward,' said Louise. 'the deed will reward

¹ See Grain dropping into Prison Note 54

itself. But methinks to stay is more dangerous than to go. Let me stay, then, and nourish the unhappy Prince, and do you depart to bring help. If they kill me before you return, I leave you my poor lute, and pray you to be kind to my poor Charlot'

'No, Louise,' replied Catharine, 'you are a more privileged and experienced wanderer than I — do you go, and if you find me dead on your return, as may well chance, give my poor father this ring and a lock of my hair, and say, Catharine died in endeavouring to save the blood of Bruce. And give this other lock to Henry; say, Catharine thought of him to the last, and that, if he has judged her too scrupulous touching the blood of others, he will then know it was not because she valued her own.'

They sobbed in each other's arms, and the intervening hours till evening were spent in endeavouring to devise some better mode of supplying the captive with nourishment, and in the construction of a tube, composed of hollow reeds, slipping into each other, by which liquids might be conveyed to him. The bell of the village church of Falkland tolled to vespers. The dey, or farm-woman, entered with her pitchers to deliver the milk for the family, and to hear and tell the news stirring. She had scarcely entered the kitchen when the female minstrel, again throwing herself in Catharine's arms, and assuring her of her unalterable fidelity, crept in silence downstairs, the little dog under her arm. A moment after, she was seen by the breathless Catharine, wrapt in the dey-woman's cloak, and walking composedly across the drawbridge.

'So,' said the warder, 'you return early to-night, May Bridget? Small mirth towards in the hall — ha, wench! Sick times are sad times!'

'I have forgotten my tallies,' said the ready-witted French-woman, 'and will return in the skimming of a bowie.'¹

She went onward, avoiding the village of Falkland, and took a footpath which led through the park. Catharine breathed freely, and blessed God when she saw her lost in the distance. It was another anxious hour for Catharine which occurred before the escape of the fugitive was discovered. This happened so soon as the dey-girl, having taken an hour to perform a task which ten minutes might have accomplished, was about to return, and discovered that some one had taken away her grey frieze cloak. A strict search was set on foot, at length the

¹ See Note 55.

women of the house remembered the glee maiden, and ventured to suggest her as one not unlikely to exchange an old cloak for a new one. The warder, strictly questioned, averred he saw the day-woman depart immediately after vespers, and on this being contradicted by the party herself, he could suggest, as the only alternative, that it must needs have been the devil. As, however, the glee woman could not be found, the real circumstances of the case were easily guessed at, and the steward went to inform Sir John Ramorny and Dwinning, who were now scarcely ever separate, of the escape of one of their female captives. Everything awakens the suspicions of the guilty. They looked on each other with faces of dismay, and then went together to the humble apartment of Catharine, that they might take her as much as possible by surprise while they inquired into the facts attending Louise's disappearance.

'Where is your companion, young woman?' said Ramorny, in a tone of austere gravity.

'I have no companion here,' answered Catharine.

'Trifle not,' replied the knight, 'I mean the glee-maiden, who lately dwelt in this chamber with you.'

'She is gone, they tell me,' said Catharine — 'gone about an hour since.'

'And whither?' said Dwinning.

'How,' answered Catharine, 'should I know which way a professed wanderer may choose to travel? She was tired no doubt of a solitary life, so different from the scenes of feasting and dancing which her trade leads her to frequent. She is gone, and the only wonder is that she should have stayed so long.'

'This, then,' said Ramorny, 'is all you have to tell us?'

'All that I have to tell you, Sir John,' answered Catharine, firmly, 'and if the Prince himself inquire, I can tell him no more.'

'There is little danger of his again doing you the honour to speak to you in person,' said Ramorny, 'even if Scotland should escape being rendered miserable by the sad event of his decease.'

'Is the Duke of Rothsay so very ill?' asked Catharine.

'No help, save in Heaven,' answered Ramorny, looking upward.

'Then may there yet be help there,' said Catharine, if human aid prove unavailing!'

'Amen!' said Ramorny, with the most determined gravity, while Dwining adopted a face fit to echo the feeling, though it seemed to cost him a painful struggle to suppress his sneering yet soft laugh of triumph, which was peculiarly excited by anything having a religious tendency

'And it is men — earthly men, and not incarnate devils, who thus appeal to Heaven, while they are devouring by inches the life-blood of their hapless master!' muttered Catharine, as her two baffled inquisitors left the apartment 'Why sleeps the thunder? But it will roll ere long, and oh! may it be to preserve as well as to punish!'

The hour of dinner alone afforded a space when, all in the castle being occupied with that meal, Catharine thought she had the best opportunity of venturing to the breach in the wall, with the least chance of being observed. In waiting for the hour, she observed some stir in the castle, which had been silent as the grave ever since the seclusion of the Duke of Rothsay. The portcullis was lowered and raised, and the creaking of the machinery was intermingled with the tramp of horse, as men-at-arms went out and returned with steeds hard-riden and covered with foam. She observed, too, that such domestics as she casually saw from her window were in arms. All this made her heart throb high, for it augured the approach of rescue, and besides, the bustle left the little garden more lonely than ever. At length the hour of noon arrived; she had taken care to provide, under pretence of her own wishes, which the pantler seemed disposed to indulge, such articles of food as could be the most easily conveyed to the unhappy captive. She whispered to intimate her presence; there was no answer, she spoke louder, still there was silence.

'He sleeps,' she muttered these words half-aloud, and with a shuddering which was succeeded by a start and a scream, when a voice replied behind her —

'Yes, he sleeps, but it is for ever'

She looked round. Sir John Ramorny stood behind her in complete armour, but the visor of his helmet was up, and displayed a countenance more resembling one about to die than to fight. He spoke with a grave tone, something between that of a calm observer of an interesting event and of one who is an agent and partaker in it.

'Catharine,' he said, 'all is true which I tell you. He is dead. You have done your best for him, you can do no more'

'I will not — I cannot believe it,' said Catharine. 'Heaven

be merciful to me' it would make one doubt of Providence, to think so great a crime has been accomplished.'

'Doubt not of Providence, Catharine, though it has suffered the prodigate to fall by his own devices. Follow me, I have that to say which concerns you. I say follow (for she hesitated), unless you prefer being left to the mercies of the brute Bonthron and the mediciner Henbane Dunning.'

'I will follow you,' said Catharine. 'You cannot do more to me than you are permitted.'

He led the way into the tower, and mounted staircase after staircase and ladder after ladder.

Catharine's resolution failed her. 'I will follow no farther,' she said. 'Whither would you lead me? If to my death, I can die here.'

'Only to the battlements of the castle, fool,' said Ramorny, throwing wide a barred door which opened upon the vaulted roof of the castle, where men were bending mangonels, as they called them (military engines, that is, for throwing arrows or stones), getting ready cross bows, and piling stones together. But the defenders did not exceed twenty in number, and Catharine thought she could observe doubt and irresolution amongst them.

'Catharine,' said Ramorny, 'I must not quit this station, which is necessary for my defence, but I can speak with you here as well as elsewhere.'

'Say on,' answered Catharine, 'I am prepared to hear you.'

'You have thrust yourself, Catharine, into a bloody secret. Have you the firmness to keep it?'

'I do not understand you, Sir John,' answered the maiden. 'Look you. I have slain — murdered, if you will — my late master, the Duke of Rothsay. The spark of life which your kindness would have fed was easily smothered. His last words called on his father. You are faint — bear up — you have more to hear. You know the crime, but you know not the provocation. See! this gauntlet is empty, I lost my right hand in his cause, and when I was no longer fit to serve him, I was cast off like a worn out hound, my loss ridiculed, and a cloister recommended, instead of the halls and palaces in which I had my natural sphere! Think on this — pity and assist me.'

'In what manner can you require my assistance?' said the trembling maiden, 'I can neither repair your loss nor cancel your crime.'

'Thou canst be silent, Catharine, on what thou hast seen

and heard in yonder thicket. It is but a brief oblivion I ask of you, whose word will, I know, be listened to, whether you say such things were or were not. That of your mountebank companion, the foreigner, none will hold to be of a pin-point's value. If you grant me this, I will take your promise for my security, and throw the gate open to those who now approach it. If you will not promise silence, I defend this castle till every one perishes, and I fling you headlong from these battlements. Ay, look at them — it is not a leap to be rashly braved. Seven courses of stairs brought you up hither with fatigue and shortened breath, but you shall go from the top to the bottom in briefer time than you can breathe a sigh! Speak the word, fair maid, for you speak to one unwilling to harm you, but determined in his purpose.

Catharine stood terrified, and without power of answering a man who seemed so desperate, but she was saved the necessity of reply by the approach of Dwining. He spoke with the same humble congés which at all times distinguished his manner, and with his usual suppressed ironical sneer, which gave that manner the lie.

'I do you wrong, noble sir, to intrude on your valancie when engaged with a fair damsel. But I come to ask a trifling question.'

'Speak, tormentor!' said Ramorny, 'ill news are sport to thee even when they affect thyself, so that they concern others also.'

'Hem! — he, he! — I only desired to know if your knighthood proposed the chivalrous task of defending the castle with your single hand — I crave pardon, I meant your single arm? The question is worth asking, for I am good for little to aid the defence, unless you could prevail on the besiegers to take physic — he, he, he! — and Bonthron is as drunk as ale and strong waters can make him, and you, he, and I make up the whole garrison who are disposed for resistance.'

'How! Will the other dogs not fight?' said Ramorny.

'Never saw men who showed less stomach to the work,' answered Dwining — 'never. But here come a brace of them. *Venit extrema dies*. He, he, he!'

Eviot and his companion Buncle now approached with sullen resolution in their faces, like men who had made their minds up to resist that authority which they had so long obeyed.

'How now!' said Ramorny, stepping forward to meet them. 'Wherefore from your posts? Why have you left the

barbican, Eviot? And you other fellow, did I not charge you to look to the mangonels?'

'We have something to tell you, Sir John Ramorny,' answered Eviot. 'We will not fight in this quarrel.'

'How — my own squires control me?' exclaimed Ramorny

'We were your squires and pages, my lord, while you were master of the Duke of Rothsay's household. It is bruited about the Duke no longer lives, we desire to know the truth.'

'What traitor dares spread such falsehoods?' said Ramorny

'All who have gone out to skirt the forest, my lord, and I myself among others, bring back the same news. The minstrel woman who left the castle yesterday has spread the report everywhere that the Duke of Rothsay is murdered, or at death's door. The Douglas comes on us with a strong force —'

'And you, cowards, take advantage of an idle report to forsake your master?' said Ramorny, indignantly

'My lord,' said Eviot, 'let Buncle and myself see the Duke of Rothsay, and receive his personal orders for defence of this castle, and if we do not fight to the death in that quarrel, I will consent to be hanged on its highest turret. But if he be gone by natural disease, we will yield up the castle to the Earl of Douglas, who is, they say, the King's lieutenant. Or if — which Heaven forefend! — the noble Prince has had foul play, we will not involve ourselves in the guilt of using arms in defence of the murderers, be they who they will.'

'Eviot,' said Ramorny, raising his mutilated arm, 'had not that glove been empty, thou hadst not lived to utter two words of this insolence.'

'It is as it is,' answered Eviot, 'and we do but our duty. I have followed you long, my lord, but here I draw bridle'

'Farewell, then, and a curse light on all of you!' exclaimed the incensed baron. 'Let my horse be brought forth!'

'Our valiance is about to run away,' said the mediciner, who had crept close to Catharine's side before she was aware. 'Catharine, thou art a superstitious fool, like most women, nevertheless thou hast some mind, and I speak to thee as one of more understanding than the buffaloes which are herding about us. These haughty barons who overstride the world, what are they in the day of adversity? Chaff before the wind. Let their sledge hammer hands or their column resembling legs have injury, and bah! the men at arms are gone. Heart and courage is nothing to them, lith and lumb everything, give them animal strength, what are they better than furious bulls,

take that away, and your hero of chivalry lies grovelling like the brute when he is hamstrung. Not so the sage, while a grain of sense remains in a crushed or mutilated frame, his mind shall be strong as ever. Catharine, this morning I was practising your death, but methinks I now rejoice that you may survive to tell how the poor mediciner, the pill-gilder, the mortar-pounder, the poison-vender, met his fate, in company with the gallant Knight of Ramorny, Baron in possession and Earl of Lindores in expectation — God save his lordship!

‘Old man,’ said Catharine, ‘if thou be indeed so near the day of thy deserved doom, other thoughts were far wholesomer than the vainglorious ravings of a vain philosophy. Ask to see a holy man —’

‘Yes,’ said Dwining, scornfully, ‘refer myself to a greasy monk, who does not — he! he! he! — understand the barbarous Latin he repeats by rote. Such would be a fitting counsellor to one who has studied both in Spain and Arabia! No, Catharine, I will choose a confessor that is pleasant to look upon, and you shall be honoured with the office. Now, look yonder at his valiancie. his eyebrow drops with moisture, his lip trembles with agony, for his valiancie — he! he! he! — is pleading for his life with his late domestics, and has not eloquence enough to persuade them to let him slip. See how the fibres of his face work as he implores the ungrateful brutes, whom he has heaped with obligations, to permit him to get such a start for his life as the hare has from the greyhounds when men course her fairly. Look also at the sullen, down-cast, dogged faces with which, fluctuating between fear and shame, the domestic traitors deny their lord this poor chance for his life. These things thought themselves the superior of a man like me! and you, foolish wench, think so meanly of your Deity as to suppose wretches like them are the work of Omnipotence!’

‘No! man of evil — no!’ said Catharine, warmly; ‘the God I worship created these men with the attributes to know and adore Him, to guard and defend their fellow-creatures, to practise holiness and virtue. Their own vices, and the temptations of the Evil One, have made them such as they now are. Oh, take the lesson home to thine own heart of adamant! Heaven made thee wiser than thy fellows, gave thee eyes to look into the secrets of nature, a sagacious heart, and a skilful hand; but thy pride has poisoned all these fair gifts, and made an ungodly atheist of one who might have been a Christian sage!’

'Atheist, say'st thou?' answered Dwining 'Perhaps I have doubts on that matter — but they will be soon solved' Yonder comes one who will send me, as he has done thousands, to the place where all mysteries shall be cleared.'

Catharine followed the mediciner's eye up one of the forest glades, and beheld it occupied by a body of horsemen advancing at full gallop In the midst was a pennon displayed, which, though its bearings were not visible to Catharine, was, by a murmur around, acknowledged as that of the Black Douglas. They halted within arrow-shot of the castle, and a herald with two trumpets advanced up to the main portal, where, after a loud flourish, he demanded admittance for the high and dreaded Archibald Earl of Douglas, Lord-Lieutenant of the King, and acting for the time with the plenary authority of his Majesty, commanding, at the same time, that the inmates of the castle should lay down their arms, all under penalty of high treason.

'You hear?' said Eviot to Ramorny, who stood sullen and undecided. 'Will you give orders to render the castle, or must I ——'

'No, villain!' interrupted the knight, 'to the last I will command you. Open the gates, drop the bridge, and render the castle to the Douglas.'

'Now, that's what may be called a gallant exertion of free-will,' said Dwining 'Just as if the pieces of brass that were screaming a minute since should pretend to call those notes their own which are breathed through them by a frowsy trumpeter'

'Wretched man,' said Catharine, 'either be silent or turn thy thoughts to the eternity on the brink of which thou art standing'

'And what is that to thee?' answered Dwining 'Thou canst not, wench, help hearing what I say to thee, and thou wilt tell it again, for thy sex cannot help that either Perth and all Scotland shall know what a man they have lost in Henbane Dwining!'

The clash of armour now announced that the newcomers had dismounted and entered the castle, and were in the act of disarming the small garrison Earl Douglas himself appeared on the battlements, with a few of his followers, and signed to them to take Ramorny and Dwining into custody Others dragged from some nook the stupified Bonthron

'It was to these three that the custody of the Prince was solely committed during his alleged illness?' said the Douglas,

prosecuting an inquiry which he had commenced in the hall of the castle

'No other saw him, my lord,' said Eviot, 'though I offered my services'

'Conduct us to the Duke's apartment, and bring the prisoners with us. Also there should be a female in the castle, if she hath not been murdered or spirited away — the companion of the glee-maiden who brought the first alarm'

'She is here, my lord,' said Eviot, bringing Catharine forward

Her beauty and her agitation made some impression even upon the impassible Earl.

'Fear nothing, maiden,' he said, 'thou hast deserved both praise and reward. Tell to me, as thou wouldst confess to Heaven, the things thou hast witnessed in this castle'

Few words served Catharine to unfold the dreadful story

'It agrees,' said the Douglas, 'with the tale of the glee-maiden, from point to point. Now show us the Prince's apartment'

They passed to the room which the unhappy Duke of Rothsay had been supposed to inhabit, but the key was not to be found, and the Earl could only obtain entrance by forcing the door. On entering, the wasted and squalid remains of the unhappy Prince were discovered, flung on the bed as if in haste. The intention of the murderers had apparently been to arrange the dead body so as to resemble a timely-parted corpse, but they had been disconcerted by the alarm occasioned by the escape of Louise. Douglas looked on the body of the misguided youth, whose wild passions and caprices had brought him to this fatal and premature catastrophe

'I had wrongs to be redressed,' he said, 'but to see such a sight as this banishes all remembrance of injury'

'He! he! It should have been arranged,' said Dwining, 'more to your omnipotence's pleasure, but you came suddenly on us, and hasty masters make slovenly service'

Douglas seemed not to hear what his prisoner said, so closely did he examine the wan and wasted features, and stiffened limbs, of the dead body before him. Catharine, overcome by sickness and fainting, at length obtained permission to retire from the dreadful scene, and, through confusion of every description, found her way to her former apartment, where she was locked in the arms of Louise, who had returned in the interval.

The investigations of Douglas proceeded. The dying hand

of the Prince was found to be clenched upon a lock of hair, resembling, in colour and texture, the coal-black bristles of Bonthron. Thus, though famine had begun the work, it would seem that Rothsay's death had been finally accomplished by violence. The private stair to the dungeon, the keys of which were found at the subaltern assassin's belt, the situation of the vault, its communication with the external air by the fissure in the walls, and the wretched lair of straw, with the fetters which remained there, fully confirmed the story of Catharine and of the glee woman.

'We will not hesitate an instant,' said the Douglas to his near kinsman, the Lord Balveny, as soon as they returned from the dungeon. 'Away with the murderers! hang them over the battlements.'

'But, my lord, some trial may be fitting,' answered Balveny.

'To what purpose?' answered Douglas. 'I have taken them red-hand,' my authority will stretch to instant execution. Yet stay—have we not some Jedwood men in our troop?'

'Plenty of Turnbells, Rutherfords, Ainslies, and so forth,' said Balveny.

'Call me an inquest of these together, they are all good men and true, saving a little shifting for their living. Do you see to the execution of these felons, while I hold a court in the great hall, and we'll try whether the jury or the provost-marshal do their work first, we will have Jedwood justice—hang in haste and try at leisure.'

'Yet stay, my lord,' said Ramorny, 'you may rue your haste—will you grant me a word out of ear shot?'

'Not for worlds!' said Douglas, 'speak out what thou hast to say before all that are here present.'

'Know all, then,' said Ramorny, aloud, 'that this noble Earl had letters from the Duke of Albany and myself, sent him by the hand of yon cowardly deserter, Buncle—let him deny it if he dare—counselling the removal of the Duke for a space from court, and his seclusion in this Castle of Falkland.'

'But not a word,' replied Douglas, sternly smiling, 'of his being flung into a dungeon—famished—strangled. Away with the wretches, Balveny, they pollute God's air too long!'

The prisoners were dragged off to the battlements. But while the means of execution were in the act of being prepared, the apothecary expressed so ardent a desire to see Catharine once more, and, as he said, for the good of his soul, that the

maiden, in hopes his obduracy might have undergone some change even at the last hour, consented again to go to the battlements, and face a scene which her heart recoiled from. A single glance showed her Bonthron, sunk in total and drunken insensibility; Ramorny, stripped of his armour, endeavouring in vain to conceal fear, while he spoke with a priest, whose good offices he had solicited, and Dwining, the same humble, obsequious-looking, crouching individual she had always known him. He held in his hand a little silver pen, with which he had been writing on a scrap of parchment.

'Catharine,' he said — 'he, he, he! — I wish to speak to thee on the nature of my religious faith.'

'If such be thy intention, why lose time with me? Speak with this good father.'

'The good father,' said Dwining, 'is — he, he! — already a worshipper of the deity whom I have served. I therefore prefer to give the altar of mine idol a new worshipper in thee, Catharine. This scrap of parchment will tell thee how to make your way into my chapel, where I have worshipped so often in safety. I leave the images which it contains to thee as a legacy, simply because I hate and condemn thee something less than any of the absurd wretches whom I have hitherto been obliged to call fellow-creatures. And now away! or remain and see if the end of the quacksalver belies his life.'

'Our Lady forbid!' said Catharine.

'Nay,' said the mediciner, 'I have but a single word to say, and yonder nobleman's valiance may hear it if he will.'

Lord Balveny approached, with some curiosity, for the undaunted resolution of a man who never wielded sword or bore armour, and was in person a poor dwindled dwarf, had to him an air of something resembling sorcery.

'You see this trifling implement,' said the criminal, showing the silver pen. 'By means of this I can escape the power even of the Black Douglas.'

'Give him no ink nor paper,' said Balveny, hastily, 'he will draw a spell.'

'Not so, please your wisdom and valiance — he, he, he!' said Dwining, with his usual chuckle, as he unscrewed the top of the pen, within which was a piece of sponge, or some such substance, no bigger than a pea. 'Now, mark this —' said the prisoner, and drew it between his lips. The effect was instantaneous. He lay a dead corpse before them, the contemptuous sneer still on his countenance.

Catharine shrieked and fled, seeking, by a hasty descent, an escape from a sight so appalling. Lord Balveny was for a moment stupified, and then exclaimed, 'This may be glamour! hang him over the battlements, quick or dead. If his foul spirit hath only withdrawn for a space, it shall return to a body with a dislocated neck.'

His commands were obeyed. Ramorny and Bonthron were then ordered for execution. The last was hanged before he seemed quite to comprehend what was designed to be done with him. Ramorny, pale as death, yet with the same spirit of pride which had occasioned his ruin, pleaded his knighthood, and demanded the privilege of dying by decapitation by the sword, and not by the noose.

'The Douglas never alters his doom,' said Balveny. 'But thou shalt have all thy rights. Send the cook hither with a cleaver.' The menial whom he called appeared at his summons.

'What shakest thou for, fellow?' said Balveny, 'here, strike me this man's gilt spurs from his heels with thy cleaver.' And now, John Ramorny, thou art no longer a knight, but a knave. To the halter with him, provost-marshal! hang him betwixt his companions, and higher than them if it may be.'

In a quarter of an hour afterwards, Balveny descended to tell the Douglas that the criminals were executed.

'Then there is no further use in the trial,' said the Earl. 'How say you, good men of inquest, were these men guilty of high treason—ay or no?'

'Guilty,' exclaimed the obsequious inquest, with edifying unanimity, 'we need no farther evidence.'

'Sound trumpets, and to horse then, with our own train only, and let each man keep silence on what has chanced here, until the proceedings shall be laid before the King, which cannot conveniently be till the battle of Palm Sunday shall be fought and ended. Select our attendants, and tell each man who either goes with us or remains behind that he who prates dies.'

In a few minutes the Douglas was on horseback, with the followers selected to attend his person. Expresses were sent to his daughter, the widowed Duchess of Rothsay, directing her to take her course to Perth, by the shores of Lochleven, without approaching Falkland, and committing to her charge Catharine Glover and the glee-woman, as persons whose safety he tendered.

As they rode through the forest, they looked back, and beheld

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CHAPTER XXXIII

The hour is nigh now hearts beat high ,
Each sword is sharpen'd well ,
And who dares die, who stoops to fly,
To morrow s light shall tell.

Sir Edwald.

WE are now to recall to our reader's recollection, that Simon Glover and his fair daughter had been hurried from their residence without having time to announce to Henry Smith either their departure or the alarming cause of it. When, therefore, the lover appeared in Curfew Street, on the morning of their flight, instead of the hearty welcome of the honest burgher, and the April reception, half joy half censure, which he had been promised on the part of his lovely daughter, he received only the astounding intelligence, that her father and she had set off early, on the summons of a stranger, who had kept himself carefully muffled from observation. To this, Dorothy, whose talents for forestalling evil, and communicating her views of it, are known to the reader, chose to add, that she had no doubt her master and young mistress were bound for the Highlands, to avoid a visit which had been made since their departure by two or three apparitors, who, in the name of a Commission appointed by the King, had searched the house, put seals upon such places as were supposed to contain papers, and left citations for father and daughter to appear before the Court of Commission on a day certain, under pain of outlawry. All these alarming particulars Dorothy took care to state in the gloomiest colours, and the only consolation which she afforded the alarmed lover was, that her master had charged her to tell him to reside quietly at Perth, and that he should soon hear news of them. This checked the smith's first resolve, which was to follow them instantly to the Highlands, and partake the fate which they might encounter.

But when he recollected his repeated feuds with divers of

the Clan Quhele, and particularly his personal quarrel with Conachar, who was now raised to be a high chief, he could not but think, on reflection, that his intrusion on their place of retirement was more likely to disturb the safety which they might otherwise enjoy there than be of any service to them. He was well acquainted with Simon's habitual intimacy with the chief of the Clan Quhele, and justly augured that the glover would obtain protection, which his own arrival might be likely to disturb, while his personal prowess could little avail him in a quarrel with a whole tribe of vindictive mountaineers. At the same time his heart throbbed with indignation, when he thought of Catharine being within the absolute power of young Conachar, whose rivalry he could not doubt, and who had now so many means of urging his suit. What if the young chief should make the safety of the father depend on the favour of the daughter? He distrusted not Catharine's affections; but then her mode of thinking was so disinterested, and her attachment to her father so tender, that, if the love she bore her suitor was weighed against his security, or perhaps his life, it was matter of deep and awful doubt whether it might not be found light in the balance. Tormented by thoughts on which we need not dwell, he resolved nevertheless to remain at home, stifle his anxiety as he might, and await the promised intelligence from the old man. It came, but it did not relieve his concern.

Sir Patrick Charteris had not forgotten his promise to communicate to the smith the plans of the fugitives. But, amid the bustle occasioned by the movement of troops, he could not himself convey the intelligence. He therefore entrusted to his agent, Kitt Henshaw, the task of making it known. But this worthy person, as the reader knows, was in the interest of Ramorny, whose business it was to conceal from every one, but especially from a lover so active and daring as Henry, the real place of Catharine's residence. Henshaw therefore announced to the anxious smith that his friend the glover was secure in the Highlands, and though he affected to be more reserved on the subject of Catharine, he said little to contradict the belief that she as well as Simon shared the protection of the Clan Quhele. But he reiterated, in the name of Sir Patrick, assurances that father and daughter were both well, and that Henry would best consult his own interest and their safety by remaining quiet and waiting the course of events.

With an agonized heart, therefore, Henry Gow determined

to remain quiet till he had more certain intelligence, and employed himself in finishing a shirt of mail, which he intended should be the best tempered and the most finely polished that his skilful hands had ever executed. This exercise of his craft pleased him better than any other occupation which he could have adopted, and served as an apology for secluding himself in his workshop, and shunning society, where the idle reports which were daily circulated served only to perplex and disturb him. He resolved to trust in the warm regard of Simon, the faith of his daughter, and the friendship of the provost, who, having so highly commended his valour in the combat with Bonthron, would never, he thought, desert him at this extremity of his fortunes. Time, however, passed on day by day, and it was not till Palm Sunday was near approaching, that Sir Patrick Charteris, having entered the city to make some arrangements for the ensuing combat, bethought himself of making a visit to the Smith of the Wynd.

He entered his workshop with an air of sympathy unusual to him, and which made Henry instantly augur that he brought bad news. The smith caught the alarm, and the uplifted hammer was arrested in its descent upon the heated iron, while the agitated arm that wielded it, strong before as that of a giant, became so powerless, that it was with difficulty Henry was able to place the weapon on the ground, instead of dropping it from his hand.

'My poor Henry,' said Sir Patrick, 'I bring you but cold news, they are uncertain, however, and, if true, they are such as a brave man like you should not take too deeply to heart.'

'In God's name, my lord,' said Henry, 'I trust you bring no evil news of Simon Glover or his daughter?'

'Touching themselves,' said Sir Patrick, 'no they are safe and well. But as to thee, Henry, my tidings are more cold. Kitt Henshaw has, I think, apprised thee that I had endeavoured to provide Catharine Glover with a safe protection in the house of an honourable lady, the Duchess of Rothsay. But she hath declined the charge, and Catharine hath been sent to her father in the Highlands. What is worst is to come. Thou mayest have heard that Gilchrist MacIain is dead, and that his son Eachin, who was known in Perth as the apprentice of old Simon, by the name of Conachar, is now the chief of Clan Quhele, and I heard from one of my domestics that there is a strong rumour among the MacIains that the young chief seeks the hand of Catharine in marriage. My domestic

learned this — as a secret, however — while in the Breadalbane country, on some arrangements touching the ensuing combat 'The thing is uncertain, but, Henry, it wears a face of likelihood.'

'Did your lordship's servant see Simon Glover and his daughter?' said Henry, struggling for breath, and coughing, to conceal from the provost the excess of his agitation.

'He did not,' said Sir Patrick, 'the Highlanders seemed jealous, and refused to permit him to speak to the old man, and he feared to alarm them by asking to see Catharine. Besides, he talks no Gaelic, nor had his informer much English, so there may be some mistake in the matter. Nevertheless, there is such a report, and I thought it best to tell it you. But you may be well assured that the wedding cannot go on till the affair of Palm Sunday be over, and I advise you to take no steps till we learn the circumstances of the matter, for certainty is most desirable, even when it is painful. Go you to the council-house,' he added, after a pause, 'to speak about the preparations for the lists in the North Inch? You will be welcome there.'

'No, my good lord.'

'Well, Smith, I judge by your brief answer that you are discomposed with this matter, but, after all, women are weather-cocks, that is the truth on't. Solomon and others have proved it before you.'

And so Sir Patrick Charteris retired, fully convinced he had discharged the office of a comforter in the most satisfactory manner.

With very different impressions did the unfortunate lover regard the tidings and listen to the consoling commentary.

'The provost,' he said bitterly to himself, 'is an excellent man, marry, he holds his knighthood so high, that, if he speaks nonsense, a poor man must hold it sense, as he must praise dead ale if it be handed to him in his lordship's silver flagon. How would all this sound in another situation? Suppose I were rolling down the steep descent of the Corrie of Dhu, and before I came to the edge of the rock, comes my Lord Provost, and cries, "Henry, there is a deep precipice, and I grieve to say you are in the fair way of rolling over it. But be not downcast, for Heaven may send a stone or a bush to stop your progress. However, I thought it would be comfort to you to know the worst, which you will be presently aware of. I do not know how many hundred feet deep the precipice descends,

but you may form a judgment when you are at the bottom, for certainty is certainty. And harkye, when come you to take a game at bowls ?" And this gossip is to serve instead of any friendly attempt to save the poor wight's neck ! When I think of this, I could go mad, seize my hammer, and break and destroy all around me. But I will be calm, and if this Highland kite, who calls himself a falcon, should stoop at my turtle dove, he shall know whether a burges of Perth can draw a bow or not.'

It was now the Thursday before the fated Palm Sunday, and the champions on either side were expected to arrive the next day, that they might have the interval of Saturday to rest, refresh themselves, and prepare for the combat. Two or three of each of the contending parties were detached to receive directions about the encampment of their little band, and such other instructions as might be necessary to the proper ordering of the field. Henry was not, therefore, surprised at seeing a tall and powerful Highlander peering anxiously about the wynd in which he lived, in the manner in which the natives of a wild country examine the curiosities of one that is more civilised. The smith's heart rose against the man on account of his country, to which our Perth burgher bore a natural prejudice, and more especially as he observed the individual wear the plaid peculiar to the Clan Quhele. The sprig of oak-leaves, worked in silk, intimated also that the individual was one of those personal guards of young Eachin, upon whose exertions in the future battle so much reliance was placed by those of their clan.

Having observed so much, Henry withdrew into his smithy, for the sight of the man raised his passion, and, knowing that the Highlander came plighted to a solemn combat, and could not be the subject of any inferior quarrel, he was resolved at least to avoid friendly intercourse with him. In a few minutes, however, the door of the smithy flew open, and, fluttering in his tartans, which greatly magnified his actual size, the Gael entered with the haughty step of a man conscious of a personal dignity superior to anything which he is likely to meet with. He stood looking around him, and seemed to expect to be received with courtesy and regarded with wonder. But Henry had no sort of inclination to indulge his vanity, and kept hammering away at a breastplate which was lying upon his anvil as if he were not aware of his visitor's presence.

'You are the Gow Chrom ?' (the bandy-legged smith), said the Highlander

'Those that wish to be crook-backed call me so,' answered Henry

'No offence meant,' said the Highlander, 'but her own self comes to buy an armour'

'Her own self's bare shanks may trot hence with her,' answered Henry, 'I have none to sell'

'If it was not within two days of Palm Sunday, herself would make you sing another song,' retorted the Gael

'And being the day it is,' said Henry, with the same contemptuous indifference, 'I pray you to stand out of my light.'

'You are an uncivil person, but her own self is *fur nan ord* too, and she knows the smith is fiery when the iron is hot.'

'If her nainsell be hammerman herself, her nainsell may make her nain harness,' replied Henry

'And so her nainsell would, and never fash you for the matter, but it is said, Gow Chrom, that you sing and whistle tunes over the swords and hainishes that you work, that have power to make the blades cut steel-lunks as if they were paper, and the plate and mail turn back steel-lances as if they were boddle prins?'

'They tell your ignorance any nonsense that Christian men refuse to believe,' said Henry 'I whistle at my work whatever comes uppermost, like an honest craftsman, and commonly it is the Highlandman's "Och hone for Houghmanstares!"¹ My hammer goes naturally to that tune'

'Friend, it is but idle to spin a horse when his legs are hamshackled,' said the Highlander, haughtily 'Her own self cannot fight even now, and there is little gallantry in taunting her thus'

'By nails and hammer, you are right there,' said the smith, altering his tone 'But speak out at once, friend, what is it thou wouldst have of me? I am in no humour for dallying'

'A hauberk for her chief, Eachin MacIain,' said the Highlander

'You are a hammerman, you say? Are you a judge of this?' said our smith, producing from a chest the mail shirt on which he had been lately employed

The Gael handled it with a degree of admiration which had something of envy in it He looked curiously at every part of its texture, and at length declared it the very best piece of armour that he had ever seen

'A hundred cows and bullocks and a good drift of sheep

¹ See Note 57.



'ARE YOU A JUDGE OF THIS?' SAID THE SMITH, PRODUCING A MAIL SHIRT
From a painting, by MacDonald

would be e'en ower cheap an offer,' said the Highlandman, by way of tentative, 'but her nainsell will never bid thes less, come by them how she can.'

'It is a fair proffer,' replied Henry, 'but gold nor gear will never buy that harness. I want to try my own sword on my own armour, and I will not give that mail coat to any one but who will face me for the best of three blows and a thrust in the fair field, and it is your chief's upon these terms'

'Hut, prut, man — take a drink and go to bed,' said the Highlander, in great scorn 'Are ye mad? Think ye the captain of the Clan Quhele will be brawling and battling with a bit Perth burgess body like you? Whisht, man, and hearken. Her nainsell will do ye mair credit than ever belonged to your kin. She will fight you for the fair harness hersell'

'She must first show that she is my match,' said Henry, with a grim smile.

'How! I, one of Eachin MacIan's leichtach, and not your match!'

'You may try me, if you will. You say you are a *sir nan ord* Do you know how to cast a sledge-hammer?'

'Ay, truly — ask the eagle if he can fly over Farragon'

'But before you strive with me, you must first try a cast with one of *my leichtach*. Here, Dunter, stand forth for the honour of Perth! And now, Highlandman, there stands a row of hammers, choose which you will, and let us to the garden.'

The Highlander, whose name was Norman nan Ord, or Norman of the Hammer, showed his title to the epithet by selecting the largest hammer of the set, at which Henry smiled. Dunter, the stout journeyman of the smith, made what was called a prodigious cast, but the Highlander, making a desperate effort, threw beyond it by two or three feet, and looked with an air of triumph to Henry, who again smiled in reply

'Will you mend that?' said the Gael, offering our smith the hammer

'Not with that child's toy,' said Henry, 'which has scarce weight to fly against the wind. Jannekin, fetch me Sampson, or one of you help the boy, for Sampson is somewhat ponderous.'

The hammer now produced was half as heavy again as that which the Highlander had selected as one of unusual weight. Norman stood astonished, but he was still more so when Henry, taking his position, swung the ponderous implement

far behind his right haunch joint, and dismissed it from his hand as if it had flown from a warlike engine. The air groaned and whistled as the mass flew through it. Down at length it came, and the iron head sunk a foot into the earth, a full yard beyond the cast of Norman.

The Highlander, defeated and mortified, went to the spot where the weapon lay, lifted it, poised it in his hand with great wonder, and examined it closely, as if he expected to discover more in it than a common hammer. He at length returned it to the owner with a melancholy smile, shrugging his shoulders and shaking his head as the smith asked him whether he would not mend his cast.

'Norman has lost too much at the sport already,' he replied. 'She has lost her own name of the Hammerer. But does her own self, the Gow Chrom, work at the anvil with that horse's load of iron?'

'You shall see, brother,' said Henry, leading the way to the smithy. 'Dunter,' he said, 'rax me that bar from the furnace', and uplifting Sampson, as he called the monstrous hammer, he plied the metal with a hundred strokes from right to left — now with the right hand, now with the left, now with both, with so much strength at once and dexterity, that he worked off a small but beautifully proportioned horse-shoe in half the time that an ordinary smith would have taken for the same purpose, using a more manageable implement.

'Oigh — oigh!' said the Highlander, 'and what for would you be fighting with our young chief, who is far above your standard, though you were the best smith ever wrought with wind and fire?'

'Hark you!' said Henry, 'you seem a good fellow, and I'll tell you the truth. Your master has wronged me, and I give him this harness freely for the chance of fighting him myself.'

'Nay, if he hath wronged you he must meet you,' said the life-guardsmen. 'To do a man wrong takes the eagle's feather out of the chief's bonnet, and were he the first in the Highlands, and to be sure so is Eachin, he must fight the man he has wronged, or else a rose falls from his chaplet.'

'Will you move him to this,' said Henry, 'after the fight on Sunday?'

'Oh, her nainsell will do her best, if the hawks have not got her nainsell's bones to pick, for you must know, brother, that Clan Chattan's claws pierce rather deep.'

'The armour is your chief's on that condition,' said Henry, 'but I will disgrace him before king and court if he does not pay me the price.'

'Deil a fear — deil a fear, I will bring him in to the barrack myself,' said Norman, 'assuredly'

'You will do me a pleasure,' replied Henry, 'and that you may remember your promise, I will bestow on you this dirk. Look — if you hold it truly, and can strike between the mail hood and the collar of your enemy, the surgeon will be needless.'

The Highlander was lavish in his expressions of gratitude, and took his leave

'I have given him the best mail harness I ever wrought,' said the smith to himself, rather repenting his liberality, 'for the poor chance that he will bring his chief into a fair field with me, and then let Catharine be his who can win her fairly. But much I dread the youth will find some evasion, unless he have such luck on Palm Sunday as may induce him to try another combat. That is some hope, however, for I have often, ere now, seen a raw young fellow shoot up after his first fight from a dwarf into a giant-queller'

Thus, with little hope, but with the most determined resolution, Henry Smith awaited the time that should decide his fate. What made him augur the worst was the silence both of the glover and of his daughter. 'They are ashamed,' he said, 'to confess the truth to me, and therefore they are silent.'

Upon the Friday at noon, the two bands of thirty men each, representing the contending clans, arrived at the several points where they were to halt for refreshments

The Clan Quhele was entertained hospitably at the rich abbey of Scone, while the provost regaled their rivals at his Castle of Kinfauns, the utmost care being taken to treat both parties with the most punctilious attention, and to afford neither an opportunity of complaining of partiality. All points of etiquette were, in the meanwhile, discussed and settled by the Lord High Constable Errol and the young Earl of Crawford, the former acting on the part of the Clan Chattan and the latter patronising the Clan Quhele. Messengers were passing continually from the one earl to the other, and they held more than six meetings within thirty hours, before the ceremonial of the field could be exactly arranged.

Meanwhile, in case of revival of ancient quarrel, many seeds of which existed betwixt the burghers and their mountain

neighbours, a proclamation commanded the citizens not to approach within half a mile of the place where the Highlanders were quartered, while on their part the intended combatants were prohibited from approaching Perth without special license. Troops were stationed to enforce this order, who did their charge so scrupulously as to prevent Simon Glover himself, burgess and citizen of Perth, from approaching the town, because he owned having come thither at the same time with the champions of Eeachin MacIain, and wore a plaid around him of their check or pattern. This interruption prevented Simon from seeking out Henry Wynd, and possessing him with a true knowledge of all that had happened since their separation, which intercourse, had it taken place, must have materially altered the catastrophe of our narrative.

On Saturday afternoon another arrival took place, which interested the city almost as much as the preparations for the expected combat. This was the approach of the Earl Douglas, who rode through the town with a troop of only thirty horse, but all of whom were knights and gentlemen of the first consequence. Men's eyes followed this dreaded peer as they pursue the flight of an eagle through the clouds, unable to ken the course of the bird of Jove, yet silent, attentive, and as earnest in observing him as if they could guess the object for which he sweeps through the firmament. He rode slowly through the city, and passed out at the northern gate. He next alighted at the Dominican convent, and desired to see the Duke of Albany. The Earl was introduced instantly, and received by the Duke with a manner which was meant to be graceful and conciliatory, but which could not conceal both art and inquietude. When the first greetings were over, the Earl said with great gravity, 'I bring you melancholy news. Your Grace's royal nephew, the Duke of Rothsay, is no more, and I fear hath perished by some foul practices.'

'Practices!' said the Duke, in confusion — 'what practices? Who dared practise on the heir of the Scottish throne?'

'Tis not for me to state how these doubts arise,' said Douglas, 'but men say the eagle was killed with an arrow fledged from his own wing, and the oak trunk rent by a wedge of the same wood.'

'Earl of Douglas,' said the Duke of Albany, 'I am no reader of riddles.'

'Nor am I a propounder of them,' said Douglas, haughtily, 'Your Grace will find particulars in these papers worthy of

perusal. I will go for half an hour to the cloister garden,¹ and then rejoin you.'

'You go not to the King, my lord?' said Albany

'No,' answered Douglas, 'I trust your Grace will agree with me that we should conceal this great family misfortune from our sovereign till the business of to-morrow be decided.'

'I willingly agree,' said Albany 'If the King heard of this loss, he could not witness the combat, and if he appear not in person, these men are likely to refuse to fight, and the whole work is cast loose. But I pray you sit down, my lord, while I read these melancholy papers respecting poor Rothsay'

He passed the papers through his hands, turning some over with a hasty glance, and dwelling on others as if their contents had been of the last importance. When he had spent nearly a quarter of an hour in this manner, he raised his eyes, and said very gravely, 'My lord, in these most melancholy documents, it is yet a comfort to see nothing which can renew the divisions in the King's councils, which were settled by the last solemn agreement between your lordship and myself. My unhappy nephew was by that agreement to be set aside, until time should send him a graver judgment. He is now removed by Fate, and our purpose in that matter is anticipated and rendered unnecessary.'

'If your Grace,' replied the Earl, 'sees nothing to disturb the good understanding which the tranquillity and safety of Scotland require should exist between us, I am not so ill a friend of my country as to look closely for such.'

'I understand you, my Lord of Douglas,' said Albany, eagerly 'You hastily judged that I should be offended with your lordship for exercising your powers of lieutenancy, and punishing the detestable murderers within my territory of Falkland. Credit me, on the contrary, I am obliged to your lordship for taking out of my hands the punishment of these wretches, as it would have broken my heart even to have looked on them. The Scottish Parliament will inquire, doubtless, into this sacrilegious deed, and happy am I that the avenging sword has been in the hand of a man so important as your lordship. Our communication together, as your lordship must well recollect, bore only concerning a proposed restraint of my unfortunate nephew until the advance of a year or two had taught him discretion?'

¹ See Gardens of the Dominicans. Note 58

'Such was certainly your Grace's purpose, as expressed to me,' said the Earl, 'I can safely avouch it'

'Why, then, noble earl, we cannot be censured because villains, for their own revengeful ends, appear to have engrafted a bloody termination on our honest purpose?'

'The Parliament will judge it after their wisdom,' said Douglas 'For my part, my conscience acquits me.'

'And mine assolzies *me*,' said the Duke with solemnity. 'Now, my lord, touching the custody of the boy James,¹ who succeeds to his father's claims of inheritance?'

'The King must decide it,' said Douglas, impatient of the conference 'I will consent to his residence anywhere save at Stirling, Doune, or Falkland.'

With that he left the apartment abruptly

'He is gone,' muttered the crafty Albany, 'and he must be my ally, yet feels himself disposed to be my mortal foe No matter, Rothsay sleeps with his fathers, James may follow in time, and then — a crown is the recompense of my perplexities'

¹ Second son of Robert III, brother of the unfortunate Duke of Rothsay, and afterwards King James I of Scotland

CHAPTER XXXIV

Thretty for thretty faucht in barreris,
At Sanct Johnstoun on a day besyde the black freris.

WYNTOUN

PALM SUNDAY now dawned. At an earlier period of the Christian Church, the use of any of the days of Passion Week for the purpose of combat would have been accounted a profanity worthy of excommunication. The Church of Rome, to her infinite honour, had decided that during the holy season of Easter, when the redemption of man from his fallen state was accomplished, the sword of war should be sheathed, and angry monarchs should respect the season termed the Truce of God. The ferocious violence of the latter wars betwixt Scotland and England had destroyed all observance of this decent and religious ordinance. Very often the most solemn occasions were chosen by one party for an attack, because they hoped to find the other engaged in religious duties and unprovided for defence. Thus the truce, once considered as proper to the season, had been discontinued, and it became not unusual even to select the sacred festivals of the church for decision of the trial by combat, to which this intended contest bore a considerable resemblance.

On the present occasion, however, the duties of the day were observed with the usual solemnity, and the combatants themselves took share in them. Bearing branches of yew in their hands, as the readiest substitute for palm boughs, they marched respectively to the Dominican and Carthusian convents, to hear High Mass, and, by a show at least of devotion, to prepare themselves for the bloody strife of the day. Great care had of course been taken that, during this march, they should not even come within the sound of each other's bagpipes, for it was certain that, like game cocks exchanging mutual notes of defiance, they would have sought out and attacked each other before they arrived at the place of combat.

The citizens of Perth crowded to see the unusual procession on the streets, and thronged the churches where the two clans attended their devotions, to witness their behaviour, and to form a judgment from their appearance which was most likely to obtain the advantage in the approaching conflict. Their demeanour in the church, although not habitual frequenters of places of devotion, was perfectly decorous, and, notwithstanding their wild and untamed dispositions, there were few of the mountaineers who seemed affected either with curiosity or wonder. They appeared to think it beneath their dignity of character to testify either curiosity or surprise at many things which were probably then presented to them for the first time.

On the issue of the combat, few even of the most competent judges dared venture a prediction, although the great size of Torquil and his eight stalwart sons induced some who professed themselves judges of the thewes and sinews of men to incline to ascribe the advantage to the party of the Clan Quhele. The opinion of the female sex was much decided by the handsome form, noble countenance, and gallant demeanour of Eachin MacIain. There were more than one who imagined they had recollection of his features, but his splendid military attire rendered the humble glover's apprentice unrecognisable in the young Highland chief, saving by one person.

That person, as may well be supposed, was the Smith of the Wynd, who had been the foremost in the crowd that thronged to see the gallant champions of Clan Quhele. It was with mingled feelings of dislike, jealousy, and something approaching to admiration that he saw the glover's apprentice stripped of his mean slough, and blazing forth as a chieftain, who, by his quick eye and gallant demeanour, the noble shape of his brow and throat, his splendid arms and well-proportioned limbs, seemed well worthy to hold the foremost rank among men selected to live or die for the honour of their race. The smith boy whom he had brushed off as he might a wasp that stung him, and, in mere compassion, forebore to despatch by treading on him.

'He looks it gallantly with my noble hauberk,' thus muttered Henry to himself, 'the best I ever wrought. Yet, if he and I stood together where there was neither hand to help nor eye to see, by all that is blessed in this holy church, the good harness should return to its owner!' All that I am worth would I give for three fair blows on his shoulders to undo my

own best work, but such happiness will never be mine. If he escape from the conflict, it will be with so high a character for courage, that he may well disdain to put his fortune, in its freshness, to the risk of an encounter with a poor burgess like myself. He will fight by his champion, and turn me over to my fellow-craftsman the hammerer, when all I can reap will be the pleasure of knocking a Highland bullock on the head. If I could but see Simon Glover! I will to the other church in quest of him, since for sure he must have come down from the Highlands.'

The congregation was moving from the church of the Dominicans when the smith formed this determination, which he endeavoured to carry into speedy execution, by thrusting through the crowd as hastily as the solemnity of the place and occasion would permit. In making his way through the press, he was at one instant carried so close to Eachin that their eyes encountered. The smith's hardy and embrowned countenance coloured up like the heated iron on which he wrought, and retained its dark red hue for several minutes. Eachin's features glowed with a brighter blush of indignation, and a glance of fiery hatred was shot from his eyes. But the sudden flush died away in ashy paleness, and his gaze instantly avoided the unfriendly but steady look with which it was encountered.

Torquil, whose eye never quitted his foster-son, saw his emotion, and looked anxiously around to discover the cause. But Henry was already at a distance, and hastening on his way to the Carthusian convent. Here also the religious service of the day was ended, and those who had so lately borne palms in honour of the great event which brought peace on earth and good-will to the children of men were now streaming to the place of combat—some prepared to take the lives of their fellow creatures or to lose their own, others to view the deadly strife with the savage delight which the heathens took in the contests of their gladiators.

The crowd was so great that any other person might well have despaired of making way through it. But the general deference entertained for Henry of the Wynd, as the champion of Perth, and the universal sense of his ability to force a passage, induced all to unite in yielding room for him, so that he was presently quite close to the warriors of the Clan Chattan. Their pipers marched at the head of their column. Next followed the well-known banner, displaying a mountain-cat rampant, with the appropriate caution—'Touch not the cat

but (*i.e.* without) the glove.' The chief followed with his two-handed sword advanced, as if to protect the emblem of the tribe. He was a man of middle stature, more than fifty years old, but betraying neither in features nor form any decay of strength or symptoms of age. His dark red close-cuiled locks were in part chequered by a few grizzled hairs, but his step and gesture were as light in the dance, in the chase, or in the battle as if he had not passed his thirtieth year. His grey eye gleamed with a wild light expressive of valour and ferocity mingled, but wisdom and experience dwelt on the expression of his forehead, eyebrows, and lips. The chosen champions followed by two and two. There was a cast of anxiety on several of their faces, for they had that morning discovered the absence of one of their appointed number, and, in a contest so desperate as was expected, the loss seemed a matter of importance to all save to their high-mettled chief, MacGillie Chattanach.

'Say nothing to the Saxons of his absence,' said this bold leader, when the diminution of his force was reported to him. 'The false Lowland tongues might say that one of Clan Chattan was a coward, and perhaps that the rest favoured his escape, in order to have a pretence to avoid the battle. I am sure that Ferquhard Day will be found in the ranks ere we are ready for battle, or, if he should not, am not I man enough for two of the Clan Quhele? or would we not fight them fifteen to thirty, rather than lose the renown that this day will bring us?'

The tribe received the brave speech of their leader with applause, yet there were anxious looks thrown out in hopes of espying the return of the deserter, and perhaps the chief himself was the only one of the determined band who was totally indifferent on the subject.

They marched on through the streets without seeing anything of Ferquhard Day, who, many a mile beyond the mountains, was busied in receiving such indemnification as successful love could bestow for the loss of honour. MacGillie Chattanach marched on without seeming to observe the absence of the deserter, and entered upon the North Inch, a beautiful and level plain, closely adjacent to the city, and appropriated to the martial exercises of the inhabitants.

The plain is washed on one side by the deep and swelling Tay. There was erected within it a strong palisade, inclosing on three sides a space of one hundred and fifty yards in length and seventy-four yards in width. The fourth side of the lists

was considered as sufficiently fenced by the river. An amphitheatre for the accommodation of spectators surrounded the palisade, leaving a large space free to be occupied by armed men on foot and horseback, and for the more ordinary class of spectators. At the extremity of the lists which was nearest to the city, there was a range of elevated galleries for the King and his courtiers, so highly decorated with rustic treillage, intermingled with gilded ornaments, that the spot retains to this day the name of the Golden, or Gilded, Arbour.

The mountain minstrelsy, which sounded the appropriate pibrochs or battle-tunes of the rival confederacies, was silent when they entered on the Inch, for such was the order which had been given. Two stately but aged warriors, each bearing the banner of his tribe, advanced to the opposite extremities of the lists, and, pitching their standards into the earth, prepared to be spectators of a fight in which they were not to join. The pipers, who were also to be neutral in the strife, took their places by their respective brattachs.

The multitude received both bands with the same general shout with which on similar occasions they welcome those from whose exertion they expect amusement, or what they term sport. The destined combatants returned no answer to this greeting, but each party advanced to the opposite extremities of the lists, where were entrances by which they were to be admitted to the interior. A strong body of men-at-arms guarded either access, and the Earl Marshal at the one and the Lord High Constable at the other carefully examined each individual, to see whether he had the appropriate arms, being steel cap, mail shirt, two-handed sword, and dagger. They also examined the numbers of each party, and great was the alarm among the multitude when the Earl of Errol held up his hand and cried — 'Ho! The combat cannot proceed, for the Clan Chattan lack one of their number.'

'What reck of that?' said the young Earl of Crawford, 'they should have counted better ere they left home.'

The Earl Marshal, however, agreed with the Constable that the fight could not proceed until the inequality should be removed, and a general apprehension was excited in the assembled multitude that, after all the preparation, there would be no battle.

Of all present there were only two perhaps who rejoiced at the prospect of the combat being adjourned, and these were the captain of the Clan Quhele and the tender hearted King

Robert. Meanwhile the two chiefs, each attended by a special friend and adviser, met in the midst of the lists, having, to assist them in determining what was to be done, the Earl Marshal, the Lord High Constable, the Earl of Crawford, and Sir Patrick Charteris. The chief of the Clan Chattan declared himself willing and desirous of fighting upon the spot, without regard to the disparity of numbers.

'That,' said Torquil of the Oak, 'Clan Quhele will never consent to. You can never win honour from us with the sword, and you seek but a subterfuge, that you may say when you are defeated, as you know you will be, that it was for want of the number of your band fully counted out. But I make a proposal. Ferquhard Day was the youngest of your band, Eachin MacIain is the youngest of ours, we will set him aside in place of the man who has fled from the combat.'

'A most unjust and unequal proposal,' exclaimed Toshach Beg, the second, as he might be termed, of MacGillie Chattanach. 'The life of the chief is to the clan the breath of our nostrils, nor will we ever consent that our chief shall be exposed to dangers which the captain of Clan Quhele does not share.'

Torquil saw with deep anxiety that his plan was about to fail when the objection was made to Hector's being withdrawn from the battle, and he was meditating how to support his proposal, when Eachin himself interfered. His timidity, it must be observed, was not of that sordid and selfish nature which induces those who are infected by it calmly to submit to dishonour rather than risk danger. On the contrary, he was morally brave, though constitutionally timid, and the shame of avoiding the combat became at the moment more powerful than the fear of facing it.

'I will not hear,' he said, 'of a scheme which will leave my sword sheathed during this day's glorious combat. If I am young in arms, there are enough of brave men around me whom I may imitate if I cannot equal.'

He spoke these words in a spirit which imposed on Torquil, and perhaps on the young chief himself.

'Now, God bless his noble heart!' said the foster-father to himself. 'I was sure the foul spell would be broken through, and that the tardy spirit which besieged him would fly at the sound of the pipe and the first flutter of the brattach!'

'Hear me, Lord Marshal,' said the Constable. 'The hour of combat may not be much longer postponed, for the day approaches to high noon. Let the chief of Clan Chattan take

the half-hour which remains, to find, if he can, a substitute for this deserter, if he cannot, let them fight as they stand.'

'Content I am,' said the Marshal, 'though, as none of his own clan are nearer than fifty miles, I see not how MacGillie Chattanach is to find an auxiliary.'

'That is his business,' said the High Constable, 'but, if he offers a high reward, there are enough of stout yeomen surrounding the lists, who will be glad enough to stretch their limbs in such a game as is expected. I myself, did my quality and charge permit, would blythely take a turn of work amongst these wild fellows, and think it fame won.'

They communicated their decision to the Highlanders, and the chief of the Clan Chattan replied—'You have judged impartially and nobly, my lords, and I deem myself obliged to follow your direction. So make proclamation, heralds, that, if any one will take his share with Clan Chattan of the honours and chances of this day, he shall have present payment of a gold crown, and liberty to fight to the death in my ranks.'

'You are something chary of your treasure, chief,' said the Earl Marshal 'a gold crown is poor payment for such a campaign as is before you.'

'If there be any man willing to fight for honour,' replied MacGillie Chattanach, 'the price will be enough, and I want not the service of a fellow who draws his sword for gold alone.'

The heralds had made their progress, moving half-way round the lists, stopping from time to time to make proclamation as they had been directed, without the least apparent disposition on the part of any one to accept of the proffered enlistment. Some sneered at the poverty of the Highlanders, who set so mean a price upon such a desperate service. Others affected resentment, that they should esteem the blood of citizens so lightly. None showed the slightest intention to undertake the task proposed, until the sound of the proclamation reached Henry of the Wynd, as he stood without the barrier, speaking from time to time with Bailie Craigdallie, or rather listening vaguely to what the magistrate was saying to him.

'Ha! what proclaim they?' he cried out.

'A liberal offer on the part of MacGillie Chattanach,' said the host of the Griffin, 'who proposes a gold crown to any one who will turn wildcat for the day, and be killed a little in his service! That's all.'

'How!' exclaimed the smith, eagerly, 'do they make proclamation for a man to fight against the Clan Quhele?'

'Ay, marry do they,' said Griffin, 'but I think they will find no such fools in Perth.'

He had hardly said the word, when he beheld the smith clear the barriers at a single bound and alight in the lists, saying, 'Here am I, sir herald, Henry of the Wynd, willing to do battle on the part of the Clan Chattan.'

A cry of admiration ran through the multitude, while the grave burghers, not being able to conceive the slightest reason for Henry's behaviour, concluded that his head must be absolutely turned with the love of fighting. The provost was especially shocked.

'Thou art mad,' he said, 'Henry! Thou hast neither two-handed sword nor shirt of mail.'

'Truly no,' said Henry, 'for I parted with a mail shirt, which I had made for myself, to yonder gay chief of the Clan Quhele, who will soon find on his shoulders with what sort of blows I clink my rivets! As for two-handed sword, why, this boy's brand will serve my turn till I can master a heavier one.'

'This must not be,' said Errol. 'Hark thee, armourer, by St Mary, thou shalt have my Milan hauberk and good Spanish sword.'

'I thank your noble earlship, Sir Gilbert Hay, but the yoke with which your brave ancestor turned the battle at Loncarty would serve my turn well enough. I am little used to sword or harness that I have not wrought myself, because I do not well know what blows the one will bear out without being cracked or the other lay on without snapping.'

The cry had in the meanwhile run through the multitude and passed into the town, that the dauntless smith was about to fight without armour, when, just as the fated hour was approaching, the shrill voice of a female was heard screaming for passage through the crowd. The multitude gave place to her importunity, and she advanced, breathless with haste, under the burden of a mail hauberk and a large two-handed sword. The widow of Oliver Proudfoot was soon recognised, and the arms which she bore were those of the smith himself, which, occupied by her husband on the fatal evening when he was murdered, had been naturally conveyed to his house with the dead body, and were now, by the exertions of his grateful widow, brought to the lists at a moment when such proved weapons were of the last consequence to their owner. Henry joyfully received the well-known arms, and the widow with trembling haste assisted in putting them on, and then took

leave of him, saying, 'God for the champion of the widow and orphan, and ill luck to all who come before him!'

Confident at feeling himself in his well-proved armour, Henry shook himself as if to settle the steel shirt around him, and, unsheathing the two handed sword, made it flourish over his head, cutting the air through which it whistled in the form of the figure eight with an ease and sleight of hand that proved how powerfully and skilfully he could wield the ponderous weapon. The champions were now ordered to march in their turns around the lists, crossing so as to avoid meeting each other, and making obeisance as they passed the Golden Arbour where the King was seated

While this course was performing, most of the spectators were again curiously comparing the stature, limbs, and sinews of the two parties, and endeavouring to form a conjecture as to the probable issue of the combat. The feud of a hundred years, with all its acts of aggression and retaliation, was concentrated in the bosom of each combatant. Their countenances seemed fiercely writhen into the wildest expression of pride, hate, and a desperate purpose of fighting to the very last.

The spectators murmured a joyful applause, in high-wrought expectation of the bloody game. Wagers were offered and accepted both on the general issue of the conflict and on the feats of particular champions. The clear, frank, and elated look of Henry Smith rendered him a general favourite among the spectators, and odds, to use the modern expression, were taken that he would kill three of his opponents before he himself fell. Scarcely was the smith equipped for the combat, when the commands of the chiefs ordered the champions into their places, and at the same moment Henry heard the voice of Simon Glover issuing from the crowd, who were now silent with expectation, and calling on him, 'Harry Smith—Harry Smith, what madness hath possessed thee?'

'Ay, he wishes to save his hopeful son-in-law that is, or is to be, from the smith's handling,' was Henry's first thought, his second was to turn and speak with him, and his third, that he could on no pretext desert the band which he had joined, or even seem desirous to delay the fight, consistently with honour

He turned himself, therefore, to the business of the hour. Both parties were disposed by the respective chiefs in three lines, each containing ten men. They were arranged with such intervals between each individual as offered him scope to

wield his sword, the blade of which was five feet long, not including the handle. The second and third lines were to come up as reserves, in case the first experienced disaster. On the right of the array of Clan Quhele, the chief, Eachin MacIain, placed himself in the second line betwixt two of his foster-brothers. Four of them occupied the right of the first line, whilst the father and two others protected the rear of the beloved chieftain. Torquil, in particular, kept close behind, for the purpose of covering him. Thus Eachin stood in the centre of nine of the strongest men of his band, having four especial defenders in front, one on each hand, and three in his rear.

The line of the Clan Chattan was arranged in precisely the same order, only that the chief occupied the centre of the middle rank, instead of being on the extreme right. This induced Henry Smith, who saw in the opposing bands only one enemy, and that was the unhappy Eachin, to propose placing himself on the left of the front rank of the Clan Chattan. But the leader disapproved of this arrangement, and having reminded Henry that he owed him obedience, as having taken wages at his hand, he commanded him to occupy the space in the third line immediately behind himself—a post of honour, certainly, which Henry could not decline, though he accepted of it with reluctance.

When the clans were thus drawn up opposed to each other, they intimated their feudal animosity and their eagerness to engage by a wild scream, which, uttered by the Clan Quhele, was answered and echoed back by the Clan Chattan, the whole at the same time shaking their swords and menacing each other, as if they meant to conquer the imagination of their opponents ere they mingled in the actual strife.

At this trying moment, Torquil, who had never feared for himself, was agitated with alarm on the part of his dault, yet consoled by observing that he kept a determined posture, and that the few words which he spoke to his clan were delivered boldly, and well calculated to animate them to combat, as expressing his resolution to partake their fate in death or victory. But there was no time for further observation. The trumpets of the King sounded a charge, the bagpipes blew up their screaming and maddening notes, and the combatants, starting forward in regular order, and increasing their pace till they came to a smart run, met together in the centre of the ground, as a furious land torrent encounters an advancing tide.

For an instant or two the front lines, hewing at each other with their long swords, seemed engaged in a succession of single combats, but the second and third ranks soon came up on either side, actuated alike by the eagerness of hatred and the thirst of honour, pressed through the intervals, and rendered the scene a tumultuous chaos, over which the huge swords rose and sunk, some still glittering, others streaming with blood, appearing, from the wild rapidity with which they were swayed, rather to be put in motion by some complicated machinery than to be wielded by human hands. Some of the combatants, too much crowded together to use those long weapons, had already betaken themselves to their poniards, and endeavoured to get within the sword sweep of those opposed to them. In the meantime, blood flowed fast, and the groans of those who fell began to mingle with the cries of those who fought, for, according to the manner of the Highlanders at all times, they could hardly be said to shout, but to yell. Those of the spectators whose eyes were best accustomed to such scenes of blood and confusion could nevertheless discover no advantage yet acquired by either party. The conflict swayed, indeed, at different intervals forwards or backwards, but it was only in momentary superiority, which the party who acquired it almost instantly lost by a corresponding exertion on the other side. The wild notes of the pipers were still heard above the tumult, and stimulated to farther exertions the fury of the combatants.

At once, however, and as if by mutual agreement, the instruments sounded a retreat, it was expressed in wailing notes, which seemed to imply a dirge for the fallen. The two parties disengaged themselves from each other, to take breath for a few minutes. The eyes of the spectators greedily surveyed the shattered array of the combatants as they drew off from the contest, but found it still impossible to decide which had sustained the greater loss. It seemed as if the Clan Chattan had lost rather fewer men than their antagonists, but in compensation, the bloody plaids and shirts of their party (for several on both sides had thrown their mantles away) showed more wounded men than the Clan Quhele. About twenty of both sides lay on the field dead or dying, and arms and legs lopped off, heads cleft to the chine, slashes deep through the shoulder into the breast, showed at once the fury of the combat, the ghastly character of the weapons used, and the fatal strength of the arms which wielded them. The chief of

the Clan Chattan had behaved himself with the most determined courage, and was slightly wounded. Eachin also had fought with spirit, surrounded by his body-guard. His sword was bloody, his bearing bold and warlike, and he smiled when old Torquil, folding him in his arms, loaded him with praises and with blessings.

The two chiefs, after allowing their followers to breathe for the space of about ten minutes, again drew up in their files, diminished by nearly one-third of their original number. They now chose their ground nearer to the river than that on which they had formerly encountered, which was encumbered with the wounded and the slain. Some of the former were observed, from time to time, to raise themselves to gain a glimpse of the field, and sink back, most of them to die from the effusion of blood which poured from the terrific gashes inflicted by the claymore.

Harry Smith was easily distinguished by his Lowland habit, as well as his remaining on the spot where they had first encountered, where he stood leaning on a sword beside a corpse, whose bonneted head, carried to ten yards' distance from the body by the force of the blow which had swept it off, exhibited the oak-leaf, the appropriate ornament of the body-guard of Eachin MacIain. Since he slew this man, Henry had not struck a blow, but had contented himself with warding off many that were dealt at himself, and some which were aimed at the chief MacGillie Chattanach became alarmed, when, having given the signal that his men should again draw together, he observed that his powerful recruit remained at a distance from the ranks, and showed little disposition to join them.

'What ails thee, man?' said the chief. 'Can so strong a body have a mean and cowardly spirit? Come, and make in to the combat.'

'You as good as called me hireling but now,' replied Henry. 'If I am such,' pointing to the headless corpse, 'I have done enough for my day's wage.'

'He that serves me without counting his hours,' replied the chief, 'I reward him without reckoning wages.'

'Then,' said the smith, 'I fight as a volunteer, and in the post which best likes me.'

'All that is at your own discretion,' replied MacGillie Chattanach, who saw the prudence of humouring an auxiliary of such promise.

'It is enough,' said Henry, and, shouldering his heavy

weapon, he joined the rest of the combatants with alacrity, and placed himself opposite to the chief of the Clan Quhele

It was then, for the first time, that Eachin showed some uncertainty. He had long looked up to Henry as the best combatant which Perth and its neighbourhood could bring into the lists. His hatred to him as a rival was mingled with recollection of the ease with which he had once, though unarmed, foiled his own sudden and desperate attack, and when he beheld him with his eyes fixed in his direction, the dripping sword in his hand, and obviously meditating an attack on him individually, his courage fell, and he gave symptoms of wavering, which did not escape his foster father

It was lucky for Eachin that Torquil was incapable, from the formation of his own temper, and that of those with whom he had lived, to conceive the idea of one of his own tribe, much less of his chief and foster son, being deficient in animal courage. Could he have imagined this, his grief and rage might have driven him to the fierce extremity of taking Eachin's life, to save him from staining his honour. But his mind rejected the idea that his dault was a personal coward, as something which was monstrous and unnatural. That he was under the influence of enchantment was a solution which superstition had suggested, and he now anxiously, but in a whisper, demanded of Hector, 'Does the spell now darken thy spirit, Eachin?'

'Yes, wretch that I am,' answered the unhappy youth, 'and yonder stands the fell enchanter!'

'What!' exclaimed Torquil, 'and you wear harness of his making? Norman, miserable boy, why brought you that accursed mail?'

'If my arrow has flown astray, I can but shoot my life after it,' answered Norman nan Ord. 'Stand firm, you shall see me break the spell.'

'Yes, stand firm,' said Torquil. 'He may be a fell enchanter, but my own ear has heard, and my own tongue has told, that Eachin shall leave the battle whole, free, and unwounded, let us see the Saxon wizard who can gainsay that. He may be a strong man, but the fair forest of the oak shall fall, stock and bough, ere he lay a finger on my dault. Ring around him, my sons, *bas air son Eachin!*'

The sons of Torquil shouted back the words, which signify, 'Death for Hector'

Encouraged by their devotion, Eachin renewed his spirit,

and called boldly to the minstrels of his clan, '*Seid suas*'—that is, 'Strike up'

The wild pibroch again sounded the onset, but the two parties approached each other more slowly than at first, as men who knew and respected each other's valour. Henry Wynd, in his impatience to begin the contest, advanced before the Clan Chattan, and signed to Eachin to come on. Norman, however, sprang forward to cover his foster-brother, and there was a general, though momentary, pause, as if both parties were willing to obtain an omen of the fate of the day from the event of this duel. The Highlander advanced, with his large sword uplifted, as in act to strike, but, just as he came within sword's length, he dropt the long and cumbrous weapon, leapt lightly over the smith's sword, as he fetched a cut at him, drew his dagger, and, being thus within Henry's guard, struck him with the weapon (his own gift) on the side of the throat, directing the blow downwards into the chest, and calling aloud, at the same time, 'You taught me the stab!'

But Henry Wynd wore his own good hauberk, doubly defended with a lining of tempered steel. Had he been less surely armed, his combats had been ended for ever. Even as it was, he was slightly wounded.

'Fool!' he replied, striking Norman a blow with the pommel of his long sword, which made him stagger backwards, 'you were taught the thrust, but not the parry', and, fetching a blow at his antagonist, which cleft his skull through the steel-cap, he strode over the lifeless body to engage the young chief, who now stood open before him.

But the sonorous voice of Torquil thundered out, '*Fan eil air son Eachin!*' (Another for Hector!) and the two brethren who flanked their chief on each side thrust forward upon Henry, and, striking both at once, compelled him to keep the defensive.

'Forward, race of the tiger-cat!' cried MacGillie Chattanach. 'Save the brave Saxon, let these kites feel your talons!'

Already much wounded, the chief dragged himself up to the smith's assistance, and cut down one of the leichtach, by whom he was assailed. Henry's own good sword rid him of the other.

'*Reist air son Eachin!*' (Again for Hector!) shouted the faithful foster-father.

'*Bas an son Eachin!*' (Death for Hector!) answered two

more of his devoted sons, and opposed themselves to the fury of the smith and those who had come to his aid, while Eachin, moving towards the left wing of the battle, sought less formidable adversaries, and again, by some show of valour, revived the sinking hopes of his followers. The two children of the oak, who had covered this movement, shared the fate of their brethren, for the cry of the Clan Chattan chief had drawn to that part of the field some of his bravest warriors. The sons of Torquil did not fall unavenged, but left dreadful marks of their swords on the persons of the dead and living. But the necessity of keeping their most distinguished soldiers around the person of their chief told to disadvantage on the general event of the combat, and so few were now the number who remained fighting, that it was easy to see that the Clan Chattan had fifteen of their number left, though most of them wounded, and that of the Clan Quhele only about ten remained, of whom there were four of the chief's body-guard, including Torquil himself.

They fought and struggled on, however, and as their strength decayed, their fury seemed to increase. Henry Wynd, now wounded in many places, was still bent on breaking through, or exterminating, the band of bold hearts who continued to fight around the object of his animosity. But still the father's shout of 'Another for Hector!' was cheerfully answered by the fatal countersign, 'Death for Hector!' and though the Clan Quhele were now outnumbered, the combat seemed still dubious. It was bodily lassitude alone that again compelled them to another pause.

The Clan Chattan were then observed to be twelve in number, but two or three were scarce able to stand without leaning on their swords. Five were left of the Clan Quhele, Torquil and his youngest son were of the number, both slightly wounded. Eachin alone had, from the vigilance used to intercept all blows levelled against his person, escaped without injury. The rage of both parties had sunk, through exhaustion, into sullen desperation. They walked staggering, as if in their sleep, through the carcasses of the slain, and gazed on them, as if again to animate their hatred towards their surviving enemies by viewing the friends they had lost.

The multitude soon after beheld the survivors of the desperate conflict drawing together to renew the exterminating feud on the banks of the river, as the spot least slippery with blood, and less encumbered with the bodies of the slain.

'For God's sake — for the sake of the mercy which we daily pray for,' said the kind-hearted old King to the Duke of Albany, 'let this be ended! Wherefore should these wretched rags and remnants of humanity be suffered to complete their butchery? Surely they will now be ruled, and accept of peace on moderate terms?'

'Compose yourself, my liege,' said his brother 'These men are the pest of the Lowlands Both chiefs are still living, if they go back unharmed, the whole day's work is cast away. Remember your promise to the council, that you would not cry "hold"'

'You compel me to a great crime, Albany, both as a king, who should protect his subjects, and as a Christian man, who respects the brother of his faith'

'You judge wrong, my lord,' said the Duke. 'these are not loving subjects, but disobedient rebels, as my Lord of Crawford can bear witness, and they are still less Christian men, for the prior of the Dominicans will vouch for me that they are more than half heathen.'

The King sighed deeply 'You must work your pleasure, and are too wise for me to contend with I can but turn away and shut my eyes from the sights and sounds of a carnage which makes me sicken. But well I know that God will punish me even for witnessing this waste of human life'

'Sound, trumpets,' said Albany, 'their wounds will stiffen if they dally longer'

While this was passing, Torquil was embracing and encouraging his young chief

'Resist the witchcraft but a few minutes longer! Be of good cheer — you will come off without either scar or scratch, wem or wound. Be of good cheer!'

'How can I be of good cheer,' said Eachin, 'while my brave kinsmen have one by one died at my feet — died all for me, who could never deserve the least of their kindness?'

'And for what were they born, save to die for their chief?' said Torquil, composedly 'Why lament that the arrow returns not to the quiver, providing it hit the mark? Cheer up yet. Here are Tormot and I but little hurt, while the wildcats drag themselves through the plain as if they were half throttled by the terriers Yet one brave stand, and the day shall be your own, though it may well be that you alone remain alive Minstrels, sound the gathering'

The pipers on both sides blew their charge, and the com-

batants again mingled in battle, not indeed with the same strength, but with unabated inveteracy. They were joined by those whose duty it was to have remained neuter, but who now found themselves unable to do so. The two old champions who bore the standards had gradually advanced from the extremity of the lists, and now approached close to the immediate scene of action. When they beheld the carnage more nearly, they were mutually impelled by the desire to revenge their brethren, or not to survive them. They attacked each other furiously with the lances to which the standards were attached, closed after exchanging several deadly thrusts, then grappled in close strife, still holding their banners, until at length, in the eagerness of their conflict, they fell together into the Tay, and were found drowned after the combat, closely locked in each other's arms. The fury of battle, the frenzy of rage and despair, infected next the minstrels. The two pipers, who, during the conflict, had done their utmost to keep up the spirits of their brethren, now saw the dispute wellnigh terminated for want of men to support it. They threw down their instruments, rushed desperately upon each other with their daggers, and each being more intent on despatching his opponent than in defending himself, the piper of Clan Quhele was almost instantly slain and he of Clan Chattan mortally wounded. The last, nevertheless, again grasped his instrument, and the pibroch of the clan yet poured its expiring notes over the Clan Chattan, while the dying minstrel had breath to inspire it. The instrument which he used, or at least that part of it called the chanter, is preserved in the family of a Highland chief to this day, and is much honoured under the name of the *federan dhu*, or 'black chanter'.¹

Meanwhile, in the final charge, young Tormot, devoted, like his brethren, by his father Torquil to the protection of his chief, had been mortally wounded by the unsparing sword of the smith. The other two remaining of the Clan Quhele had also fallen, and Torquil, with his foster son and the wounded Tormot, forced to retreat before eight or ten of the Clan Chattan, made a stand on the bank of the river, while their enemies were making such exertions as their wounds would permit to come up with them. Torquil had just reached the spot where he had resolved to make the stand, when the youth Tormot dropped and expired. His death drew from his father the first and only sigh which he had breathed throughout the eventful day

¹ See Note 59

'My son 'Tormot!' he said, 'my youngest and dearest! But if I save Hector, I save all. Now, my darling dault, I have done for thee all that man may, excepting the last. Let me undo the clasps of that ill-omened armour, and do thou put on that of 'Tormot, it is light, and will fit thee well. While you do so, I will rush on these crippled men, and make what play with them I can. I trust I shall have but little to do, for they are following each other like disabled steers. At least, darling of my soul, if I am unable to save thee, I can show thee how a man should die.'

While Torquil thus spoke, he unloosed the clasps of the young chief's hauberk, in the simple belief that he could thus break the meshes which fear and necromancy had twined about his heart.

'My father — my father — my more than parent,' said the unhappy Eachin, 'stay with me! With you by my side, I feel I can fight to the last.'

'It is impossible,' said Torquil. 'I will stop them coming up, while you put on the hauberk. God eternally bless thee, beloved of my soul!'

And then, brandishing his sword, Torquil of the Oak rushed forward with the same fatal war-cry which had so often sounded over that bloody field, '*Bas air son Eachin!*' The words rung three times in a voice of thunder, and each time that he cried his war-shout he struck down one of the Clan Chattan as he met them successively straggling towards him. 'Brave battle, hawk — well flown, falcon!' exclaimed the multitude, as they witnessed exertions which seemed, even at this last hour, to threaten a change of the fortunes of the day. Suddenly these cries were hushed into silence, and succeeded by a clashing of swords so dreadful, as if the whole conflict had recommenced in the person of Henry Wynd and Torquil of the Oak. They cut, foined, hewed, and thrust as if they had drawn their blades for the first time that day, and their inveteracy was mutual, for Torquil recognised the foul wizard who, as he supposed, had cast a spell over his child, and Henry saw before him the giant who, during the whole conflict, had interrupted the purpose for which alone he had joined the combatants — that of engaging in single combat with Hector. They fought with an equality which, perhaps, would not have existed, had not Henry, more wounded than his antagonist, been somewhat deprived of his usual agility.

Meanwhile Eachin, finding himself alone, after a disorderly

and vain attempt to put on his foster-brother's harness, became animated by an emotion of shame and despair, and hurried forward to support his foster-father in the terrible struggle, ere some other of the Clan Chattan should come up. When he was within five yards, and sternly determined to take his share in the death-fight, his foster-father fell, cleft from the collar-bone wellnigh to the heart, and murmuring with his last breath, '*Bas air son Eachin !*' The unfortunate youth saw the fall of his last friend, and at the same moment beheld the deadly enemy who had hunted him through the whole field standing within sword's point of him, and brandishing the huge weapon which had hewed its way to his life through so many obstacles. Perhaps this was enough to bring his constitutional timidity to its highest point, or perhaps he recollected at the same moment that he was without defensive armour, and that a line of enemies, halting indeed and crippled, but eager for revenge and blood, were closely approaching. It is enough to say, that his heart sickened, his eyes darkened, his ears tingled, his brain turned giddy, all other considerations were lost in the apprehension of instant death, and, drawing one ineffectual blow at the smith, he avoided that which was aimed at him in return by bounding backward, and, ere the former could recover his weapon, Eachin had plunged into the stream of the Tay. A roar of contumely pursued him as he swam across the river, although, perhaps, not a dozen of those who joined in it would have behaved otherwise in the like circumstances. Henry looked after the fugitive in silence and surprise, but could not speculate on the consequences of his flight, on account of the faintness which seemed to overpower him as soon as the animation of the contest had subsided. He sat down on the grassy bank, and endeavoured to stanch such of his wounds as were pouring fastest.

The victors had the general meed of gratulation. The Duke of Albany and others went down to survey the field, and Henry Wynd was honoured with particular notice.

'If thou wilt follow me, good fellow,' said the Black Douglas, 'I will change thy leathern apron for a knight's girdle, and thy burgage tenement for an hundred pound land to maintain thy rank withal.'

'I thank you humbly, my lord,' said the smith, dejectedly, 'but I have shed blood enough already, and Heaven has punished me by foiling the only purpose for which I entered the combat.'

'How, friend?' said Douglas 'Didst thou not fight for the Clan Chattan, and have they not gained a glorious conquest?'

'*I fought for my own hand,*' said the smith, indifferently, and the expression is still proverbial in Scotland.¹

The good King Robert now came up on an ambling palfrey, having entered the barriers for the purpose of causing the wounded to be looked after

'My Lord of Douglas,' he said, 'you vex the poor man with temporal matters when it seems he may have short time to consider those that are spiritual Has he no friends here who will bear him where his bodily wounds and the health of his soul may be both cared for?'

'He hath as many friends as there are good men in Perth,' said Sir Patrick Charteris, 'and I esteem myself one of the closest.'

'A churl will savour of churl's kind,' said the haughty Douglas, turning his horse aside, 'the proffer of knighthood from the sword of Douglas had recalled him from death's door, had there been a drop of gentle blood in his body'

Disregarding the taunt of the mighty earl, the Knight of Kinfauns dismounted to take Henry in his arms, as he now sunk back from very faintness But he was prevented by Simon Glover, who, with other burgesses of consideration, had now entered the barrace

'Henry — my beloved son Henry!' said the old man 'O, what tempted you to this fatal affray? Dying — speechless?'

'No — not speechless,' said Henry. 'Catharine —'

He could utter no more
'Catharine is well, I trust, and shall be thine — that is, if —'

'If she be safe, thou wouldst say, old man,' said the Douglas, who, though something affronted at Henry's rejection of his offer, was too magnanimous not to interest himself in what was passing 'She is safe, if Douglas's banner can protect her — safe, and shall be rich. Douglas can give wealth to those who value it more than honour.'

'For her safety, my lord, let the heartfelt thanks and blessings of a father go with the noble Douglas For wealth, we are rich enough. Gold cannot restore my beloved son'

'A marvel!' said the Earl 'a churl refuses nobility, a citizen despises gold!'

'Under your lordship's favour,' said Sir Patrick, 'I, who am

¹ Meaning, I did such a thing for my own pleasure, not for your profit.

knight and noble, take license to say, that such a brave man as Henry Wynd may reject honourable titles, such an honest man as this reverend citizen may dispense with gold.'

'You do well, Sir Patrick, to speak for your town, and I take no offence,' said the Douglas 'I force my bounty on no one But,' he added, in a whisper to Albany, 'your Grace must withdraw the King from this bloody sight, for he must know *that* to-night which will ring over broad Scotland when to-morrow dawns. This feud is ended Yet even *I* grieve that so many brave Scottishmen lie here slain, whose brands might have decided a pitched field in their country's cause.'

With difficulty King Robert was withdrawn from the field, the tears running down his aged cheeks and white beard, as he conjured all around him, nobles and priests, that care should be taken for the bodies and souls of the few wounded survivors, and honourable burial rendered to the slain The priests who were present answered zealously for both services, and redeemed their pledge faithfully and piously

Thus ended this celebrated conflict of the North Inch of Perth. Of sixty-four brave men (the minstrels and standard-bearers included) who strode manfully to the fatal field, seven alone survived, who were conveyed from thence in litters, in a case little different from the dead and dying around them, and mingled with them in the sad procession which conveyed them from the scene of their strife. Eachin alone had left it void of wounds and void of honour

It remains but to say, that not a man of the Clan Quhele survived the bloody combat except the fugitive chief, and the consequence of the defeat was the dissolution of their confederacy The clans of which it consisted are now only matter of conjecture to the antiquary, for, after this eventful contest, they never assembled under the same banner The Clan Chattan, on the other hand, continued to increase and flourish, and the best families of the Northern Highlands boast their descent from the race of the Cat-a-Mountain¹

¹ See Combat on the North Inch Note 60

CHAPTER XXXV

WHILE the King rode slowly back to the convent which he then occupied, Albany, with a discomposed aspect and faltering voice, asked the Earl of Douglas, 'Will not your lordship, who saw this most melancholy scene at Falkland, communicate the tidings to my unhappy brother?'

'Not for broad Scotland,' said the Douglas 'I would sooner bare my breast, within flight-shot, as a butt to an hundred Tynedale bowmen. No, by St Bride of Douglas! I could but say I saw the ill-fated youth dead. How he came by his death, your Grace can perhaps better explain. Were it not for the rebellion of March and the English war, I would speak my own mind of it.' So saying, and making his obeisance to the King, the Earl rode off to his own lodgings, leaving Albany to tell his tale as he best could.

'The rebellion and the English war!' said the Duke to himself 'Ay, and thine own interest, haughty earl, which, imperious as thou art, thou darest not separate from mine. Well, since the task falls on me, I must and will discharge it.'

He followed the King into his apartment. The King looked at him with surprise after he had assumed his usual seat.

'Thy countenance is ghastly, Robin,' said the King 'I would thou wouldst think more deeply when blood is to be spilled, since its consequences affect thee so powerfully. And yet, Robin, I love thee the better that thy kind nature will sometimes show itself, even through thy reflecting policy.'

'I would to Heaven, my royal brother,' said Albany, with a voice half choked, 'that the bloody field we have seen were the worst we had to see or hear of this day. I should waste little sorrow on the wild kerne who he piled on it like carrion. But——' He paused.

'How!' exclaimed the King, in terror 'What new evil? Rothsay? It must be—it is Rothsay! Speak out! What new folly has been done? What fresh mischance?'

'My lord — my liege, folly and mischance are now ended with my hapless nephew'

'He is dead! — he is dead!' screamed the agonized parent. 'Albany, as thy brother, I conjure thee — But no, I am thy brother no longer. As thy king, dark and subtle man, I charge thee to tell the worst.'

Albany faltered out, 'The details are but imperfectly known to me, but the certainty is, that my unhappy nephew was found dead in his apartment last night from sudden illness — as I have heard.'

'O, Rothsay! — O, my beloved David! Would to God I had died for thee, my son — my son!'

So spoke, in the emphatic words of Scripture, the helpless and bereft father, tearing his grey beard and hoary hair, while Albany, speechless and conscience struck, did not venture to interrupt the tempest of his grief. But the agony of the King's sorrow almost instantly changed to fury — a mood so contrary to the gentleness and timidity of his nature, that the remorse of Albany was drowned in his fear.

'And this is the end,' said the King, 'of thy moral saws and religious maxims! But the besotted father who gave the son into thy hands — who gave the innocent lamb to the butcher — is a king, and thou shalt know it to thy cost. Shall the murderer stand in presence of his brother — stained with the blood of that brother's son? No! What ho, without there! MacLous! — Brandanes! Treachery! Murder! Take arms, if you love the Stuart!'

MacLous, with several of the guards, rushed into the apartment.

'Murder and treason!' exclaimed the miserable King. 'Brandanes, your noble Prince —' Here his grief and agitation interrupted for a moment the fatal information it was his object to convey. At length he resumed his broken speech — 'An axe and a block instantly into the courtyard! Arrest —' The word choked his utterance.

'Arrest whom, my noble liege?' said MacLous, who, observing the King influenced by a tide of passion so different from the gentleness of his ordinary demeanour, almost conjectured that his brain had been disturbed by the unusual horrors of the combat he had witnessed. 'Whom shall I arrest, my liege?' he replied. 'Here is none but your Grace's royal brother of Albany.'

'Most true,' said the King, his brief fit of vindictive passion

soon dying away 'Most true — none but Albany — none but my parents' child — none but my brother O God! enable me to quell the sinful passion which glows in this bosom. *Sancta Maria, ora pro nobis!*'

MacLouis cast a look of wonder towards the Duke of Albany, who endeavoured to hide his confusion under an affectation of deep sympathy, and muttered to the officer — 'The great misfortune has been too much for his understanding.'

'What misfortune, please your Grace?' replied MacLouis. 'I have heard of none'

'How! not heard of the death of my nephew Rothsay?'

'The Duke of Rothsay dead, my Lord of Albany?' exclaimed the faithful Brandane, with the utmost horror and astonishment 'When, how, and where?'

'Two days since — the manner as yet unknown — at Falkland.'

MacLouis gazed at the Duke for an instant, then, with a kindling eye and determined look, said to the King, who seemed deeply engaged in his mental devotion — 'My liege! a minute or two since you left a word — one word — unspoken. Let it pass your lips, and your pleasure is law to your Brandanes!'

'I was praying against temptation, MacLouis,' said the heart-broken King, 'and you bring it to me Would you arm a madman with a drawn weapon? But oh, Albany! my friend — my brother — my bosom counsellor — how — how camest thou by the heart to do this?'

Albany, seeing that the King's mood was softening, replied with more firmness than before — 'My castle has no barrier against the power of death I have not deserved the foul suspicions which your Majesty's words imply I pardon them, from the distraction of a bereaved father But I am willing to swear by cross and altar, by my share in salvation, by the souls of our royal parents —'

'Be silent, Robert!' said the King 'add not perjury to murder And was this all done to gain a step nearer to a crown and sceptre? Take them to thee at once, man, and mayst thou feel as I have done, that they are both of red-hot iron! Oh, Rothsay — Rothsay! thou hast at least escaped being a king!'

'My liege,' said MacLouis, 'let me remind you that the crown and sceptre of Scotland are, when your Majesty ceases to bear them, the right of Prince James, who succeeds to his brother's rights'

'True, MacLouis,' said the King, eagerly, 'and will succeed,

THE FAIR MAID OF PERTH

poor child, to his brother's perils! Thanks, MacLous — thanks. You have reminded me that I have still work upon earth. Get thy Brandanes under arms with what speed thou canst. Let no man go with us whose truth is not known to thee. None in especial who has trafficked with the Duke of Albany — that man, I mean, who calls himself my brother — and order my litter to be instantly prepared. We will to Dunbarton, MacLous, or to Bute. Precipices, and tides, and my Brandanes' hearts shall defend the child till we can put oceans betwixt him and his cruel uncle's ambition. Farewell, Robert of Albany — farewell for ever, thou hard hearted, bloody man! Enjoy such share of power as the Douglas may permit thee. But seek not to see my face again, far less to approach my remaining child, for, that hour thou dost, my guards shall have orders to stab thee down with their partizans. MacLous, look it be so directed'

The Duke of Albany left the presence without attempting further justification or reply

What followed is matter of history. In the ensuing Parliament, the Duke of Albany prevailed on that body to declare him innocent of the death of Rothsay, while, at the same time, he showed his own sense of guilt by taking out a remission or pardon for the offence. The unhappy and aged monarch secluded himself in his Castle of Rothsay, in Bute, to mourn over the son he had lost, and watch with feverish anxiety over the life of him who remained. As the best step for the youthful James's security, he sent him to France to receive his education at the court of the reigning sovereign. But the vessel in which the Prince of Scotland sailed was taken by an English cruiser, and, although there was a truce for the moment betwixt the kingdoms, Henry IV ungenerously detained him a prisoner. This last blow completely broke the heart of the unhappy King Robert III. Vengeance followed, though with a slow pace, the treachery and cruelty of his brother Robert of Albany's own grey hairs went, indeed, in peace to the grave, and he transferred the regency which he had so foully acquired to his son Murdoch. But, nineteen years after the death of the old King, James I. returned to Scotland, and Duke Murdoch of Albany, with his sons, was brought to the scaffold, in expiation of his father's guilt and his own.¹

¹ See Death of Rothsay Note 61

CHAPTER XXXVI

The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However Fortune kick the ba',
Has aye some cause to smile.

BURNS.

WE now return to the Fair Maid of Perth, who had been sent from the horrible scene at Falkland, by order of the Douglas, to be placed under the protection of his daughter, the now widowed Duchess of Rothsay. That lady's temporary residence was a religious house called Campsie, the ruins of which still occupy a striking situation on the Tay. It arose on the summit of a precipitous rock, which descends on the princely river, there rendered peculiarly remarkable by the cataract called Campsie Linn, where its waters rush tumultuously over a range of basaltic rock, which intercepts the current, like a dike erected by human hands. Delighted with a site so romantic, the monks of the abbey of Cupar reared a structure there, dedicated to an obscure saint, named St Hunnand, and hither they were wont themselves to retire for pleasure or devotion. It had readily opened its gates to admit the noble lady who was its present inmate, as the country was under the influence of the powerful Lord Drummond, the ally of the Douglas. There the Earl's letters were presented to the Duchess by the leader of the escort which conducted Catharine and the glee-maiden to Campsie. Whatever reason she might have to complain of Rothsay, his horrible and unexpected end greatly shocked the noble lady, and she spent the greater part of the night in indulging her grief, and in devotional exercises.

On the next morning, which was that of the memorable Palm Sunday, she ordered Catharine Glover and the minstrel into her presence. The spirits of both the young women had been much sunk and shaken by the dreadful scenes in which they had so lately been engaged, and the outward appearance

of the Duchess Marjory was, like that of her father, more calculated to inspire awe than confidence. She spoke with kindness, however, though apparently in deep affliction, and learned from them all which they had to tell concerning the fate of her erring and inconsiderate husband. She appeared grateful for the efforts which Catharine and the glee-maiden had made, at their own extreme peril, to save Rothsay from his horrible fate. She invited them to join in her devotions, and at the hour of dinner gave them her hand to kiss, and dismissed them to their own refection, assuring both, and Catharine in particular, of her efficient protection, which should include, she said, her father's, and be a wall around them both, so long as she herself lived.

They retired from the presence of the widowed Princess, and partook of a repast with her duennas and ladies, all of whom, amid their profound sorrow, showed a character of stateliness which chilled the light heart of the Frenchwoman, and imposed restraint even on the more serious character of Catharine Glover. The friends, for so we may now term them, were fain, therefore, to escape from the society of these persons, all of them born gentlewomen, who thought themselves but ill-assorted with a burgher's daughter and a strolling glee-maiden, and saw them with pleasure go out to walk in the neighbourhood of the convent. A little garden, with its bushes and fruit-trees, advanced on one side of the convent, so as to skirt the precipice, from which it was only separated by a parapet built on the ledge of the rock, so low that the eye might easily measure the depth of the crag, and gaze on the conflicting waters which foamed, struggled, and chafed over the reef below.

The Fair Maiden of Perth and her companion walked slowly on a path that ran within this parapet, looked at the romantic prospect, and judged what it must be when the advancing summer should clothe the grove with leaves. They observed for some time a deep silence. At length the gay and bold spirit of the glee-maiden rose above the circumstances in which she had been and was now placed.

'Do the horrors of Falkland, fair may, still weigh down your spirits? Strive to forget them as I do—we cannot tread life's path lightly, if we shake not from our mantles the rain drops as they fall.'

'These horrors are not to be forgotten,' answered Catharine. 'Yet my mind is at present anxious respecting my father's safety, and I cannot but think how many brave men may be

at this instant leaving the world, even within six miles of us, or little farther'

'You mean the combat betwixt sixty champions, of which the Douglas's equerry told us yesterday? It were a sight for a minstrel to witness. But out upon these womanish eyes of mine—they could never see swords cross each other without being dazzled. But see—look yonder, May Catharine—look yonder! That flying messenger certainly brings news of the battle.'

'Methinks I should know him who runs so wildly,' said Catharine. 'But if it be he I think of, some wild thoughts are urging his speed.'

As she spoke, the runner directed his course to the garden. Louise's little dog ran to meet him, barking furiously, but came back, to cower, creep, and growl behind its mistress, for even dumb animals can distinguish when men are driven on by the furious energy of irresistible passion, and dread to cross or encounter them in their career. The fugitive rushed into the garden at the same reckless pace. His head was bare, his hair dishevelled, his rich acton and all his other vestments looked as if they had been lately drenched in water. His leathern buskins were cut and torn, and his feet marked the sod with blood. His countenance was wild, haggard, and highly excited, or, as the Scottish phrase expresses it, much 'raised'.

'Conachar!' said Catharine, as he advanced, apparently without seeing what was before him, as hares are said to do when severely pressed by the greyhounds. But he stopped short when he heard his own name.

'Conachar,' said Catharine, 'or rather Eachin MacIan, what means all this? Have the Clan Quhele sustained a defeat?'

'I have borne such names as this maiden gives me,' said the fugitive, after a moment's recollection. 'Yes, I was called Conachar when I was happy, and Eachin when I was powerful. But now I have no name, and there is no such clan as thou speak'st of, and thou art a foolish maid to speak of that which is not to one who has no existence.'

'Alas! unfortunate——'

'And why unfortunate, I pray you?' exclaimed the youth. 'If I am coward and villain, have not villainy and cowardice command over the elements? Have I not braved the water without its choking me, and trod the firm earth without its opening to devour me? And shall a mortal oppose my purpose?'

'He raves, alas!' said Catharine. 'Haste to call some help.'

He will not harm me, but I fear he will do evil to himself. See how he stares down on the roaring waterfall!’

The glee-woman hastened to do as she was ordered, and Conachar’s half-frenzied spirit seemed relieved by her absence. ‘Catharine,’ he said, ‘now she is gone, I will say I know thee—I know thy love of peace and hatred of war. But hearken, I have, rather than strike a blow at my enemy, given up all that a man calls dearest. I have lost honour, fame, and friends, and such friends! (he placed his hands before his face) Oh! their love surpassed the love of woman! Why should I hide my tears? All know my shame, all should see my sorrow. Yes, all might see, but who would pity it? Catharine, as I ran like a madman down the strath, man and woman called “shame” on me! The beggar to whom I flung an alms, that I might purchase one blessing, threw it back in disgust, and with a curse upon the coward! Each bell that tolled rung out, “Shame on the recreant carliff!” The brute beasts in their lowing and bleating, the wild winds in their rustling and howling, the hoarse waters in their dash and roar, cried, “Out upon the dastard!” The faithful nine are still pursuing me, they cry with feeble voice, “Strike but one blow in our revenge, we all died for you!”’

While the unhappy youth thus raved, a rustling was heard in the bushes. ‘There is but one way!’ he exclaimed, springing upon the parapet, but with a terrified glance towards the thicket, through which one or two attendants were stealing, with the purpose of surprising him. But the instant he saw a human form emerge from the cover of the bushes, he waved his hands wildly over his head, and shrieking out, ‘*Bas air Eachin!*’ plunged down the precipice into the raging cataract beneath.

It is needless to say, that aught save thistledown must have been dashed to pieces in such a fall. But the river was swelled, and the remains of the unhappy youth were never seen. A varying tradition has assigned more than one supplement to the history. It is said by one account, that the young captain of Clan Quhele swam safe to shore, far below the Linn of Campsie, and that, wandering disconsolately in the deserts of Rannoch, he met with Father Clement, who had taken up his abode in the wilderness as a hermit, on the principle of the old Culdees. He converted, it is said, the heart-broken and penitent Conachar, who lived with him in his cell, sharing his devotion and privations, till death removed them in succession.

Another wilder legend supposes that he was snatched from death by the *daoine-shie*, or fairy-folk, and that he continues to wander through wood and wild, armed like an ancient Highlander, but carrying his sword in his left hand. The phantom appears always in deep grief. Sometimes he seems about to attack the traveller, but, when resisted with courage, always flies. These legends are founded on two peculiar points in his story — his evincing timidity and his committing suicide — both of them circumstances almost unexampled in the history of a mountain chief.

When Simon Glover, having seen his friend Henry duly taken care of in his own house in Curfew Street, arrived that evening at the Place of Campsie, he found his daughter extremely ill of a fever, in consequence of the scenes to which she had lately been a witness, and particularly the catastrophe of her late playmate. The affection of the glee-maiden rendered her so attentive and careful a nurse, that the glover said it should not be his fault if she ever touched lute again, save for her own amusement.

It was some time ere Simon ventured to tell his daughter of Henry's late exploits, and his severe wounds; and he took care to make the most of the encouraging circumstance, that her faithful lover had refused both honour and wealth rather than become a professed soldier and follow the Douglases. Catharine sighed deeply and shook her head at the history of bloody Palm Sunday on the North Inch. But apparently she had reflected that men rarely advance in civilisation or refinement beyond the ideas of their own age, and that a headlong and exuberant courage, like that of Henry Smith, was, in the iron days in which they lived, preferable to the deficiency which had led to Conachar's catastrophe. If she had any doubts on the subject, they were removed in due time by Henry's protestations, so soon as restored health enabled him to plead his own cause.

'I should blush to say, Catharine, that I am even sick of the thoughts of doing battle. Yonder last field showed carnage enough to glut a tiger. I am therefore resolved to hang up my broadsword, never to be drawn more unless against the enemies of Scotland.'

'And should Scotland call for it,' said Catharine, 'I will buckle it round you.'

'And, Catharine,' said the joyful glover, 'we will pay largely

for soul masses for those who have fallen by Henry's sword, and that will not only cure spiritual flaws, but make us friends with the church again.'

'For that purpose, father,' said Catharine, 'the hoards of the wretched Dwining may be applied. He bequeathed them to me, but I think you would not mix his base blood-money with your honest gains?'

'I would bring the plague into my house as soon,' said the resolute glover

The treasures of the wicked apothecary were distributed accordingly among the four monasteries, nor was there ever after a breath of suspicion concerning the orthodoxy of old Simon or his daughter

Henry and Catharine were married within four months after the battle of the North Inch, and never did the corporations of the glovers and hammermen trip their sword dance so featly as at the wedding of the boldest burgess and brightest maiden in Perth. Ten months after, a gallant infant filled the well-spread cradle, and was rocked by Louise to the tune of

Bold and true,
In bonnet blue.

The names of the boy's sponsors are recorded, as 'Ane Hie and Michty Lord, Archibald Erl of Douglas, ane Honorabil and gude Knicht, Schir Patrick Charteris of Kinfauns, and ane Gracious Princess, Marjory Dowaire of his Serene Highness David, umquhile Duke of Rothsay' Under such patronage a family rises fast, and several of the most respected houses in Scotland, but especially in Perthshire, and many individuals distinguished both in arts and arms, record with pride their descent from the Gow Chrom and the Fair Maid of Perth.

NOTES TO FAIR MAID OF PERTH

NOTE 1 — NEWEST NEW TOWN, EDINBURGH, p ix

THIS Newest New Town in case Mr Croftangry's lucubrations should outlive its possession of any right to that designation was begun, I think in 1824, on the park and gardens attached to a quondam pretty suburban residence of the Earls of Moray from whose different titles, and so forth, the names of the places and streets erected were, of course, taken Aug. 1831

NOTE 2 — GEORGE IV'S VISIT TO EDINBURGH, p ix

The visit of George IV to Scotland in August 1822 will not soon be forgotten. It satisfied many who had shared Dr Johnson's doubts on the subject, that the old feelings of loyalty in spite of all the derision of modern wits, continued firmly rooted, and might be appealed to with confidence, even under circumstances apparently the most unfavourable. Who that had observed the state of public feeling with respect to this most amiable prince's domestic position at a period but a few months earlier would have believed that he should ever witness such scenes of enthusiastic and rapturous devotion to his person as filled up the whole panorama of his fifteen days at Edinburgh? Aug. 1831

NOTE 3. — TRANSLATION OF CONTINUATOR OF FORDUN, p xxiv

In the year of our Lord one thousand three hundred and ninety six, a great part of the north of Scotland beyond the mountains, was disturbed by two pestilent caterans and their followers namely Scheabeg and his kin of the Clan Kay and Cristl Jonson with his kin called the Clan Quhele who by no paction or management could be pacified and by no art of the King or governor could be subdued until the noble and active Lord, David of Lindesay and Crawford, and the Lord Thomas, Earl of Moray applied to the task their diligence and powers and so arranged matters betwixt the parties that they agreed to meet before the King on a certain day at Perth and each to select thirty of his tribe to encounter with swords, bows and arrows, and targets all other weapons and armour excluded, by which encounter an end might be put to the strife of the clans and the land enjoy peace. This contract highly pleased both parties and on the next day of the month before the feast of St. Michael on the North Inch of Perth, before the King governor and an immense multitude they accordingly appeared duly and entered into a most fierce conflict, in which out of the sixty all were killed save one of the Clan Kay and eleven of the opposite side. It also fell out there, that, after they were all assembled in the lists, one of them, looking around for a mode of escape, leaped from among the whole body into the river Tay, and crossed it by swimming. He

was pursued by thousands but never caught. The two parties stood there upon astonished, as unable to proceed with the engagement on account of the want of the fugitive, for the party having its numbers entire would not consent to let one be taken away, nor could the other party by any reward induce any one to supply the place of the absentee. All stood clattering in stupor, accordingly, complaining of the loss of the fugitive. And that whole business seemed even likely to break short, when lo! into the midst of the space there broke a common mechanic, low in stature, but fierce in aspect, saying, 'Here am I! who will induce me to enter with these workmen into this theatric game? I will try the sport for half a mark, asking but this beyond, that, if I come living out of these lists, I shall receive my bread from some of you while I live, because as it is said, "greater love hath no man than that he layeth down his life for his friends." With what reward shall I be gifted, then, who [to serve the state] lay down my life for the enemies of the King and the state?' What he desired was at once promised by the King and several nobles. With that the man drew his bow, and sent the first arrow into the opposite band, killing one of them. Immediately thereafter the arrows by the shields clatter, and the swords vibrate and as butchers deal with oxen in the shambles, so ruthlessly and fearlessly do the parties massacre one another promiscuously and by turns. Nor was there one found among so many who, from want of will or heart, sought to shrink behind the backs of others, or to decline the terrible contest. The volunteer before mentioned finally escaped unhurt. After this event, the North was quiet for a long time, nor did the caterans make excursions thence as formerly (*Lamg*).

NOTE 4 — MR SENIOR'S CRITICISM, p xxv

Mr Senior, in criticising *The Fair Maid*, 'while he picks many holes in the plot, estimates the characters very highly. Of the glee-maiden he says, "Louise is a delightful sketch. Nothing can be more exquisite than the manner in which her story is partly told and partly hinted, or than the contrast between her natural and her professional character", and after discussing at some length Rothsay, Henbane, Ramorny, etc, he declares Conachar's character to be 'perfectly tragic, neither too bad for sympathy nor so good as to render his calamity revolting; its great merit is the boldness with which we are called upon to sympathise with a deficiency which is generally the subject of unmitigated scorn' "—Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, vol ix. pp 223, 224

NOTE 5 — TIBER AND TAY, p 1

Such is the Author's opinion, founded perhaps on feelings of national pride, of the relative claims of the classical river and the Scottish one. Should he ever again be a blotter of paper, he hopes to be able to speak on this subject the surer language of personal conviction. Aug 1831

NOTE 6 — VIEW FROM THE WICKS OF BAIGLIE, p 3

The following note is supplied by a distinguished local antiquary [Mr Morrison] —

'The modern method of conducting the highways through the valleys and along the bases, instead of over the tops of the mountains, as in the days when Chrystal Croftangry travelled, has deprived the stranger of two very striking points of view on the road from Edinburgh to Perth. The first of these presented itself at the summit of one of the Ochills, and the second, which was, in fact, but a nearer view of a portion of the first, was

¹ [Scott proposed to spend the next winter, 1831-32, at Naples.]

enjoyed on attaining the western shoulder of the Hill of Moredun or Moncrieff. This view from Moncrieff (that which, it is said made the Romans exclaim that they had found another Field of Mars on the bank of another Tiber) now opens to the traveller in a less abrupt and striking manner than formerly, but it still retains many of those features which Pennant has so warmly eulogised. The view from the Ochills has been less fortunate for the road here winds through a narrow but romantic valley amongst these eminences and the passing stranger is ushered into Strathern without an opportunity being offered to him of surveying the magnificent scene which in days of no ancient date every traveller from the South had spread out before him at the Wicks of Balgile.

But in seeking out this spot—and it will repay the toil of the ascent a thousandfold—the admirer of such scenes should not confine his researches to the Wicks of Balgile strictly so called but extend them westward until he gain the old road from Kilross to the church of Drone being that by which Mr Croftangry must have journeyed. The point cannot be mistaken it is the only one from which Perth itself is visible. To this station for reasons that the critic will duly appreciate, might with great propriety be applied the language of one of the guides at Dunkeld on reaching a bold projecting rock on Craik Vennan—"Ah sir, this is the *decisive point*!"

The pencil of Mr D O Hill was employed to give this celebrated view from the Wicks of Balgile as one of the illustrations of this volume in the Collected Edition, 48 vols, of 1820-33.

NOTE 7 — AUTHOR'S DESCRIPTION OF PERTH, p 4

Chrystal Croftangry expresses here the feelings of the Author, as nearly as he could recall them after such a lapse of years. I am however informed by various letters from Perthshire that I have made some little mistakes about names. Sure enough the general effect of the valley of the Tay and the ancient town of Perth rearing its grey head among the rich pastures and beside the gleaming waters of that noblest of Scottish streams, must remain so as to justify warmer language than Mr Croftangry had at his command Aug 1831

NOTE 8 — SCOTTISH ROYAL MARRIAGES, p 5

David II after the death of his Queen Jane [Joanna] married his mistress, a lusty woman, namit Margaret [Scott writes Catharine] Logie, and though he soon repented and would fain have repudiated her the Pope interesting himself in her favour he found himself bound. As to the next generation Boece tells us that, 'Afore he [King Robert II] marryit the Erie of Ross's daughter he had Elizabeth Mure [of Rowallan] in place of his wife. In the thrid year of King Robert deceasit Euphame his quene. King Robert incontinent marryit Elizabeth Mure lemman afore reheralt, for the affection that he had to hir barnis. — Bellenden bk xvi chap 1

Robert III himself was a son of Elizabeth Mure.

NOTE 9 — CATERAN p 18

Cateran or robber the usual designation of the Celtic borderers on the lands of the Sassenach. The beautiful Lake of the Trossachs is supposed to have taken its name from the habits of its frequenters.

NOTE 10 — ROBERT BRUCE, p 20

The story of Bruce when in sore straits, watching a spider near his bed, as it made repeated unsuccessful efforts to attach its thread, but, still

persevering, at last attained the object, and drawing from this an augury which encouraged him to proceed in spite of fortune's hard usage, is familiar to the reader of Barbour. It was ever after held a foul crime in any of the name of Bruce, or inheriting Gentle King Robert's blood, to injure an insect of this tribe. But indeed it is well known that compassion towards the weak formed part of his character through life. And the beautiful incident of his stopping his army when on the march in circumstances of pressing difficulty in the Ulster campaign, because a poor *lavandere* (washer-woman) was taken with the pains of childbirth, and must have been left, had he proceeded, to the mercy of the Irish kerns, is only one of many anecdotes that to this day keep up a peculiar tenderness, as well as pride of feeling, in the general recollection of this great man, now five hundred years mingled with the dust.

NOTE 11 — CULROSS GIRDLES, p. 24

The girdle is the thin plate of iron used for the manufacture of the staple luxury of Scotland, the oaten cake. The town of Culross was long celebrated for its girdles.

NOTE 12 — EFFEIR OF WAR, p. 26

That is, not in dread of war, but in the guise which effeirs, or belongs, to war, in arms, namely, offensive and defensive. 'Bodin in feir of war,' a frequent term in old Scottish history and muniments, means arrayed in warlike guise.

NOTE 13 — GLUNE-AMIE, p. 29

This word has been one of the torments of the lexicographers. There is no doubt that in Perthshire, and wherever the Highlanders and the Lowlanders bordered on each other, it was a common term whereby, whether in scorn or honour, the Gaelic race used to be designated. Whether the etymon be, as Celtic scholars say, *gluine-amach* — i. e. 'the gartered' — and certainly the garter has always been a marking feature in 'the garb of old Gaul' — or, as Dr Jamieson seems to insinuate, the word originally means 'black cattle,' and had been contemptuously applied by the Sassenach to the herdsman, as on an intellectual level with his herd, I shall not pretend to say, more than that *adhuc sub judice lis est*.

NOTE 14 — HIGH STREET, p. 34

The two following notes are furnished by a gentleman well versed in the antiquities of bonny St Johnston —

'Some confusion occasionally occurs in the historical records of Perth, from there having been two high or principal streets in that city — the North High Street, still called *the* High Street, and the South High Street, now known only as the South Street, or Shoegate. An instance of this occurs in the evidence of one of the witnesses on the Gowrie Conspiracy, who deposed that the Earl of Gowrie ran in from "the High Street", whereas the earl's house stood in that part of the town now known as the South Street. This circumstance will explain how the smith had to pass St. Ann's chapel and St. John's church on his way from the High Street to Curfew Row, which edifice he would not have approached if his morning walk had been taken through the more northerly of the two principal streets.'

NOTE 15 — CURFEW STREET p 34

Curfew Street, or Row, must at a period not much earlier than that of the story have formed part of the suburbs of Perth. It was the wynd or row immediately surrounding the castle-yard, and had probably been built, in part at least, soon after the castle was raised and its moat filled up by Robert Bruce. There is every probability that in the days of Robert the Third it was of greater extent than at present the Castle Gable which now terminates it to the eastward having then run in a line with the Skinner gate as the ruins of some walls still bear witness. The shops as well as the houses, of the glovers were then as the name implies, chiefly in the Skinner, etc. but the charters in possession of the incorporation show that the members had considerable property in or adjacent to the Curfew Row consisting not only of fields and gardens, but of dwelling houses.

In the wall of the corner house of the Curfew Row adjacent to Blackfriars Vennel there is still to be seen a niche in the wall where the curfew bell hung. This house formed at one time a part of a chapel dedicated to St. Bartholomew and in it at no very distant period the members of the glover incorporation held their meetings.

NOTE 16 — KEDDIE'S RING p 40

There is a tradition that one Keddle a tailor found in ancient days a ring possessing the properties of that of Gyges in a cavern of the romantic Hill of Kinnoul near Perth.

NOTE 17 — SPORRAN p 54

The Highland pouch generally formed of goat skin and worn in front of the garb is called in Gaelic a *sporrán*. A *sporrán-muillach* is a shaggy pouch formed, as they usually are of goat skin, or some such material, with the rough side outermost.

NOTE 18 — THE GLOVERS p 56

Our local antiquary says, 'The Perth artisans of this craft were of great repute and numbered amongst them from a very early period, men of considerable substance. There are still extant among their records many charters and grants of money and lands to various religious purposes in particular to the upholding of the altar of St. Bartholomew one of the richest of the many shrines within the parish church of St. John.

While alluding to these evidences of the rich possessions of the old glovers of Perth it ought not to pass unnoticed—as Henry pinched Simon on the subject of his rival artificers in leather the cordwalners—that the chaplain alders of St. Crispin, on the Leonard Hall property were afterwards bought up by the glovers.

The avocations of this incorporation were not always of a peaceful nature. They still show a banner under which their forefathers fought in the troubles of the 17th century. It bears this inscription "The perfect honour of a craft or beauty of a trade is not in wealth but in moral worth whereby virtue gains renowne and surmounted by the words Grace and Peace," the date 1604.

The only other relic in the archives of this body which calls for notice in this place is a leathern lash called The whip of St. Bartholomew which the craft are often admonished in the records to apply to the back of refractory apprentices. It cannot have existed in the days of our friend the glover otherwise its frequent application to the shoulders of Conachar would have been matter of record in the history of that family.

NOTE 19. — HORSE AND HATTOCK, p 70

'Horse and hattock,' the well-known cry of the fairies at mounting for a moonlight expedition, came to be familiarly adopted on any occasion of mounting

NOTE 20 — BARONS OF KINFAUNS, p 74

It is generally believed that the ancient barons of Kinfauns are now represented in the male line by a once powerful branch of the name, the Charterises of Amisfield, in Dumfriesshire. The remains of the castle, close to which is their modern residence, attest the former extent of their resources. The name of Sir Thomas Longueville, Bart., of Prestatyn [Flintshire] stood on the Nova Scotia list within these twenty years, and he and his family claimed to be the true progeny of the Red Rover

NOTE 21 — EAST PORT, p 75

The following is extracted from a kind communication of the well-known antiquary, Mr Morrison of Perth —

'The port at which the deputation for Kinfauns must have met was a strongly-fortified gate at the east end of the High Street, opening to the bridge. On the north side of the street adjoining the gate stood the chapel of the Virgin, from which the monks had access to the river by a flight of steps, still called "Our Lady's Stairs." Some remains of this chapel are yet extant, and one of the towers is in a style of architecture which most antiquaries consider peculiar to the age of Robert III. Immediately opposite, on the south side of the street, a staircase is still to be seen, evidently of great antiquity, which is said to have formed part of Gowrie's palace. But as Gowrie House stood at the other end of the Watergate, as most of the houses of the nobility were situated *between* the staircase we now refer to and Gowrie House, and as, singularly enough, this stair is built upon ground which, although in the middle of the town, is not within the burgh lands, some of the local antiquaries do not hesitate to say that it formed part of the royal palace, in which the kings of Scotland resided, until they found more secluded, and probably more comfortable, lodging in the Blackfriars' monastery. Leaving the determination of this question to those who have more leisure for solving it, thus far is certain, that the place of rendezvous for the hero of the tale and his companions was one of some consequence in the town, where their bearing was not likely to pass unobserved. The bridge to which they passed through the gate was a very stately edifice. Major calls it, *Pontem Sancti Joannis ingentem apud Perth*. The date of its erection is not known, but it was extensively repaired by Robert Bruce, in whose reign it suffered by the repeated sieges to which Perth was subjected, as well as by some of those inundations of the Tay to which it was frequently exposed, and one of which eventually swept it away in 1621.'

NOTE 22 — JOHNSTONE FAMILY, p 80

Every Scotchman must regret that the name of Johnstone should have disappeared from the peerage, and hope that ere long some one of the many claimants for the minor honours at least of the house of Annandale may make out a case to the satisfaction of the House of Lords. The great estates of the family are still nearly entire, and in worthy hands. They have passed to a younger branch of the noble house of Hopetoun, one of the claimants of the elder titles.

NOTE 23 — DUKES IN SCOTLAND, p 92

This creation and that of the dukedom of Albany, in favour of the king's brother, were the first instances of ducal rank in Scotland. Buchanan mentions the innovation in terms which may be considered as showing that even he partook in the general prejudice with which that title was viewed in Scotland down to a much later period. It had indeed, been in almost every case united with heavy misfortunes, not rarely with tragic crimes.

NOTE 24 — THIGGERS AND SORNERS, p 98

Thiggers and sorners, i. e. sturdy beggars, the former, however, being, as the word implies, more civil than the latter.

NOTE 25 — GALILEE OF A CHURCH, p 99

The galilee of a Catholic cathedral is a small side chapel to which excommunicated persons have access, though they must not enter the body of the church. Mr. Surtees suggests that the name of the place thus appropriated to the consolation of miserable penitents was derived from the text *Ite, nunciate fratribus meis ut eant in Galileam ibi me videbunt*. Matt. xxviii. 10. See *History of Durham* vol. i. p. lvi. Criminals claiming sanctuary were for obvious reasons, accustomed to place themselves in this part of the edifice.

NOTE 26 — BRANDANES, p 105

The men of the Isle of Bute were called Brandanes from what derivation is not quite certain though the strong probability lies with Dr. Leyden who deduces the name from the patron saint of the islands in the Firth of Clyde — viz. St. Brendan. The territory of Bute was the king's own patrimony and its natives his personal followers. The noble family of Bute to whom the island now belongs, are an ancient illegitimate branch of the royal house.

NOTE 27 — MONKS OF ARBROATH AND EARL DOUGLAS, p 106

The complaint of the monks of Arbroath about the too great honour the Earl of Douglas had paid them in becoming their guest with a train of a thousand men passed into a proverb and was never forgotten when the old Scots churchmen railed at the nobility who in the sequel demolished the church out of that earnest yearning they had long felt for her goods.

NOTE 28 — LAY OF POOR LOUISE, p 108

This lay has been set to beautiful music by a lady whose composition to say nothing of her singing might make any poet proud of his verses. Mrs. Robert Arkwright, born Miss Kemble.¹

NOTE 29 — ROTHSAY'S CHARACTER, p 141

Mr. Chrystal Croftangry had not, it must be confessed when he indited this sentence, exactly recollected the character of Rothsay as given by the prior of Lochleven.

Cunnand into letterature,
A seymly persone in stature.
Bk. ix. chap. 23.

¹ [See Lockhart's *Life of Scott*, ix. pp. 106, 236.]

NOTE 30 — BRATTACH, p 115

Standard—literally, cloth. The Lowland language still retains the word 'brat,' which, however, is only now applicable to a child's pinafore, or a coarse towel. To such mean offices may words descend.

NOTE 31 — POISONING, p 182

The extent to which the science of poisoning was carried in the Middle Ages on the continent is well known. The hateful practice was more and more refined, and still more generally adopted, afterwards, and we are told, among other instances of diabolical cunning, of gloves which could not be put on without inflicting a mortal disease, of letters which, on being opened, diffused a fatal vapour, etc etc. Voltaire justly and candidly mentions it as a distinguishing characteristic of the British, that political poisonings make little, if any, figure in their history.

NOTE 32 — EASTERN'S E'EN, p 184

Eastern's E'en, the evening before the commencement of the fast—*Anglicé*, Shrovetide, the season of being shriven, or of confession and absolution, before beginning the penance of Lent. The cock-fights, etc, still held at this period are relics of the Catholic carnival that preceded the weeks of abstinence.

NOTE 33 — SPICKLER, p 196

The seconds in ancient single combats were so called, from the white sticks which they carried, in emblem of their duty, to see fair play between the combatants.

NOTE 34 — MUMMING DIGNITARIES, p 200

The Scottish Statute Book affords abundant evidence of the extravagant and often fatal frolics practised among our ancestors under the personages elected to fill the high offices of Queen of May, Prince of Yule (Christmas), Abbott of Unreason, etc etc, corresponding to the Boy Bishop of England and the French *Abbé de Liesse*, or *Abbas Letitiæ*. Shrovetide was not less distinguished by such mumming dignitaries.

NOTE 35 — MASSAMORE, p 201

The massamore, or massymore, the principal dungeon of the feudal castle, is supposed to have derived its name from our intercourse with the Eastern nations at the time of the Crusades. Dr Jamieson quotes an old Latin Itinerary 'Proximus est carcer subterraneus, sive, ut Mauri appellant, mazmorra.'

NOTE 36 — ST JOHNSTON'S HUNT IS UP, p 216

This celebrated slogan or war-cry was often accompanied by a stirring strain of music, which was of much repute in its day, but which has long eluded the search of musical antiquaries. It is described by the local poet [of Perth], Mr Adamson, as a great inspirer of courage.

Courage to give was mightily then blown
St. Johnston's Hunt's up, since most famous known
By all musicians —

Muses' Threnodie, 5th Muse

From the description which follows one might suppose that it had also been accompanied by a kind of war-dance

O! how they bend their backs and fingers tirl!
Moving their quivering heads, their brains do whirl
With divers moods, and as with uncouth rapture
Transported, so do shake their bodies' structure
Their eyes do reel heads, arms, and shoulders move,
Feet, legs, and hands, and all their parts approve
That heavenly harmonie; while as they throw
Their brows, O mighty strain! that's brave! they shew
Great fantasia —

Ibid Id.

NOTE 37 — HENRY SMITH OR WYND, p 218

Mr Morrison says 'The various designations by which Henry or Hal of the Wynd the Gow Chrom or Bandy legged Smith of St. Johnston was known have left the field open to a great variety of competitors for the honour of being reckoned among his descendants. The want of early registers, and various other circumstances, prevent our venturing to pronounce any verdict on the comparative strength of these claims, but we shall state them all fairly and briefly

First we have the Henry or Hendrie families, who can produce many other instances besides their own in which a Christian name has become that of a family or tribe from the celebrity attached to it through the great deeds of some one of their ancestors by whom it was borne. Then follow the Halls, Halls and Halleys among whom even some of the ancient and honourable race of the Halkets have ranged themselves. All these claims are however, esteemed very lightly by the Wynds, who to this day pride themselves on their thews and sinews, and consider that their ancestor being styled "Henrie Winde" by the metrical historian of the town is of itself proof sufficient that their claim is more solid than the name would altogether imply

It is rather singular that, in spite of all the ill will which Henry seems to have borne to the Celts, and the contemptuous terms in which he so often speaks of them in the text the Gows should be found foremost among the claimants and that the strife should lie mainly between them and their Saxon namesakes the Smiths families whose number opulence and respect ability will render it an extremely difficult matter to say which of them are in the direct line even if it should be clearer than it is that the children of the hero were known by their father's occupation and not by his residence

It only remains to notice the pretensions of the Chroms, Crooms, Crambs, or Crombles, a name which every schoolboy will associate if not with the athletic, at least with the gymnastic exercises for which the Gow Chrom and the grammar school of Perth were equally celebrated. We need scarcely add that while the Saxon name corresponding with the word *gow* has brought a host of competitors into the field there has not yet started any claimant resting his pretensions on the quality expressed in the epithet *chrom* i e bandy legged

NOTE 38 — THE COUNCIL-ROOM p 235

Mr Morrison says The places where the public assemblies of the citizens, or their magistrates were held were so seldom changed in former times, that there seems every reason to conclude that the meetings of the town council of Perth were always held in or near the place where they

still convene The room itself is evidently modern, but the adjoining building, which seems to have been reared close to, if it did not actually form a part of, the Chapel of the Virgin, bears many marks of antiquity The room in which it is not improbable the council meetings were held about the period of our story had been relieved of part of its gloomy aspect in the reign of the Third James, by the addition of one of those octagonal towers which distinguish the architecture of his favourite Cochrane The upper part of it and the spire are modern, but the lower structure is a good specimen of that artist's taste

'The power of trying criminal cases of the most serious kind, and of inflicting the highest punishment of the law, was granted by Robert III to the magistrates of Perth, and was frequently exercised by them, as the records of the town abundantly prove'

NOTE 39 — MORRICE-DANCERS, p 236

Considerable diversity of opinion exists respecting the introduction of the morrice dance into Britain The name points it out as of Moorish origin, and so popular has this leaping kind of dancing for many centuries been in this country, that, when Handel was asked to point out the peculiar taste in dancing and music of the several nations of Europe, to the French he ascribed the minuet, to the Spaniard the saraband, to the Italian the arietta, to the English the hornpipe or morrice dance

The local antiquary whose kindness has already been more than once acknowledged says —

'It adds not a little interest to such an inquiry, in connexion with a story in which the fortunes of a Perth glover form so prominent a part, to find that the Glover Incorporation of Perth have preserved entire among their relics the attire of one of the morrice-dancers, who, on some festive occasion, exhibited his paces "to the jocose recreation" of one of the Scottish monarchs, while on a visit to the Fair City

'This curious vestment is made of fawn-coloured silk, in the form of a tunic, with trappings of green and red satin. There accompany it two hundred and fifty-two small circular bells, formed into twenty-one sets of twelve bells each, upon pieces of leather, made to fasten to various parts of the body What is most remarkable about these bells is the perfect intonation of each set, and the regular musical intervals between the tone of each The twelve bells on each piece of leather are of various sizes, yet all combining to form one perfect intonation in concord with the leading note in the set These concords are maintained not only in each set, but also in the intervals between the various pieces The performer could thus produce, if not a tune, at least a pleasing and musical chime, according as he regulated with skill the movements of his body This is sufficient evidence that the morrice dance was not quite so absurd and unmeaning as might at first be supposed, but that a tasteful performer could give pleasure by it to the skilful, as well as amusement to the vulgar'

NOTE 40 — HIGH CHURCH OF ST JOHN, p 241

'There is,' says Mr Morrison, 'a simplicity in the internal architecture of the building which bespeaks a very ancient origin, and makes us suspect that the changes it has undergone have in a great measure been confined to its exterior Tradition ascribes its foundation to the Picts, and there is no doubt that in the age immediately subsequent to the termination of that monarchy it was famed throughout all Scotland It is probable that the western part of it was built about that period, and the eastern not long afterwards, and in both divisions there is still to be seen a unity and beauty of design which is done little justice to by the broken, irregular, and paltry

manner in which the exterior has at various times been patched up. When the three churches into which it is now cut down were in one, the ceilings high and decorated, the aisles enriched by the offerings of the devotees to the various altars which were reared around it and the arches free from the galleries which now deform all these Gothic buildings. It must have formed a splendid theatre for such a spectacle as that of the trial by fire right.

NOTE 41 — LOCKMAN, p 201

Executioner So called because one of his dues consisted in taking a small ladleful (Scottice, lock) of meal out of every caskful exposed in the market.

NOTE 42 — ORDEAL BY FIRE p 272

In a volume of miscellanies published in Edinburgh in 1820, under the name of *Janus* [pp 44-49], there is included a very curious paper illustrative of the solemnity with which the Catholic Church in the dark ages superintended the appeal to Heaven by the ordeal of fire and as the ceremonial on occasions such as that in the text was probably much the same as what is there described, an extract may interest the reader

CHURCH SERVICE FOR THE ORDEAL BY FIRE

We are all well aware that the ordeal by fire had, during many centuries, the sanction of the church and, moreover, that, considering in what hands the knowledge of those times lay, this blasphemous horror could never have existed without the connivance and even actual co-operation, of the priesthood.

It is only a few years ago, however, that any actual form of ritual, set apart by ecclesiastical authority for this atrocious ceremony of fraud, has been recovered. Mr Busching, the well known German antiquary, has the merit of having discovered a most extraordinary document of this kind in the course of examining the charter-chest of an ancient Thuringian monastery and he has published it in a periodical work, entitled *Die Vorzeit*, in 1817. We shall translate the prayers, as given in that work, as literally as possible. To those who suspected no deceit, there can be no doubt this service must have been as awfully impressive as any that is to be found in the formularies of any church; but words are wanting to express the abject guilt of those who, well knowing the base trickery of the whole matter, who, having themselves assisted in preparing all the appliances of legerdemain behind the scenes of the sanctuary-stage, dared to clothe their iniquity in the most solemn phraseology of religion.

A fire was kindled within the church, not far from the great altar. The person about to undergo the ordeal was placed in front of the fire surrounded by his friends, by all who were in any way interested in the result of the trial, and by the whole clergy of the vicinity. Upon a table near the fire, the coultar over which he was to walk, the bar he was to carry, or, if he were a knight, the steel gloves which, after they had been made red hot, he was to put on his hands, were placed in view of all.

Part of the usual service of the day being performed, a priest advances, and places himself in front of the fire, uttering, at the same moment, the following prayer, which is the first Mr Busching gives —

‘O Lord God, bless this place, that herein there may be health, and holiness, and purity, and sanctification, and victory, and humility, and meekness, fulfilment of the law and obedience to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. May thy blessing, O God of purity and justice, be upon this place, and upon all that be therein for the sake of Christ, the Redeemer of the world.’

A second priest now lifts the iron, and bears it towards the fire. A series of prayers follows; all to be repeated ere the iron is laid on the fire

These are the Prayers to be said over the Fire and the Iron.

‘1. Lord God, Almighty Father Fountain of Light, hear us:—enlighten us, O thou that dwellest in light unapproachable. Bless this fire, O God; and as from the midst of the fire thou didst of old enlighten Moses, so from this flame enlighten and purify our hearts, that we may be worthy, through Christ our Lord, to come unto thee, and unto the life eternal.

'2. Our Father which art in Heaven, etc

'3 O Lord, save thy servant Lord God, send him help out of Zion thy holy hill. Save him, O Lord Hear us, O Lord. O Lord, be with us

'4. O God, Holy and Almighty, hear us By the majesty of thy most holy name, and by the coming of thy dear Son, and by the gift of the comfort of thy Holy Spirit, and by the justice of thine eternal seat, hear us, good Lord Purify this metal, and sanctify it, that all falsehood and deceit of the devil may be cast out of it, and utterly removed, and that the truth of thy righteous judgment may be opened and made manifest to all the faithful that cry unto thee this day, through Jesus Christ, our Lord'

The iron is now placed in the fire, and sprinkled with consecrated water, both before and after it is so placed The mass is said while the iron is heating, the introductory Scripture being—'O Lord, thou art just, and righteous are all thy judgments.' The priest delivers the wafer to the person about to be tried, and, ere he communicates, the following prayer is said by the priest and congregation —

'We pray unto thee, O God, that it may please thee to absolve this thy servant, and to clear him from his sins Purify him, O heavenly Father, from all the stains of the flesh, and enable him, by thy all-covering and atoning grace, to pass through this fire — thy creature — triumphantly, being justified in Christ our Lord.'

Then the Gospel — 'Then there came one unto Jesus, who fell upon his knees, and cried out, Good Master, what must I do that I may be saved? Jesus said, Why callest thou me good?' etc

The chief priest, from the altar, now addresses the accused, who is still kneeling near the fire —

'By the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and by the Christianity whose name thou bearest, and by the baptism in which thou wert born again, and by all the blessed relics of the saints of God that are preserved in this church, I conjure thee, Come not unto this altar, nor eat of this body of Christ, if thou beest guilty in the things that are laid to thy charge, but if thou beest innocent therein, come, brother, and come freely'

The accused then comes forward and communicates, the priest saying, 'This day may the body and blood of Jesus Christ, which were given and shed for thee, be thy protection and thy succour, yea, even in the midst of the flame'

The priest now reads this prayer — 'O Lord, it hath pleased thee to accept our spiritual sacrifice May the joyful partaking in this holy sacrament be comfortable and useful to all that are here present, and serviceable to the removing of the bondage and thralldom of whatsoever sins do most easily beset us Grant also, that to this thy servant it may be of exceeding comfort, gladdening his heart, until the truth of thy righteous judgment be revealed.'

The organ now peals, and Kyrie Eleison and the Latany are sung in full chorus.

After this comes another prayer —

'O God! thou that through fire hast shown forth so many signs of thy almighty power! thou that didst snatch Abraham, thy servant, out of the brands and flames of the Chaldeans, wherein many were consumed! thou that didst cause the bush to burn before the eyes of Moses, and yet not to be consumed! God, that didst send thy Holy Spirit in the likeness of tongues of fiery flame, to the end that thy faithful servants might be visited and set apart from the unbelieving generation, God, that didst safely conduct the three children through the flame of the Babylonians, God, that didst waste Sodom with fire from heaven, and preserve Lot, thy servant, as a sign and a token of thy mercy O God, show forth yet once again thy visible power, and the majesty of thy unerring judgment That truth may be made manifest, and falsehood avenged, make thou this fire thy minister before us, powerless be it where is the power of purity, but sorely burning, even to the flesh and the sinews, the hand that hath done evil, and that hath not feared to be lifted up in false swearing O God! from whose eye nothing can be concealed, make thou this fire thy voice to us thy servants, that it may reveal innocence, or cover iniquity with shame Judge of all the earth, hear us Hear us, good Lord, for the sake of Jesus Christ thy Son'

The priest now dashes once more the holy water over the fire, saying, 'Upon this fire be the blessing of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that it may be a sign to us of the righteous judgment of God'

The priest pauses, instantly the accused approaches to the fire, and lifts the iron, which he carries nine yards from the flame The moment he lays it down he is surrounded by the priests, and borne by them into the vestry, there his hands are wrapped in linen cloths, sealed down with the signet of the church. These are removed on the third day, when he is declared innocent or guilty, according to the condition in which his hands are found. '*Si sinus rubescens in vestigio ferri reperitur, culpabilis ducatur Sin autem mundus reperitur, laus Deo referatur*'

Such is certainly one of the most extraordinary records of the craft, the audacity, and the weakness of mankind.

The belief that the corpse of a murdered person would bleed on the touch, or at the approach of the murderer, was universal among the Northern nations. We find it seriously urged in the High Court of Justiciary at Edinburgh so late as 1088 as an evidence of guilt. The case was that of Philip Standfield accused of the murder of his father, and this part of the evidence against him is thus stated in the libel, or indictment. And when his father's dead body was sighted and inspected by chyrurgeons, and the clear and evident signs of the murder had appeared, the body was sewed up, and most carefully cleaned and his nearest relations and friends were desired to lift his body to the coffin and accordingly, James Row, merchand (who was in Edinburgh in the time of the murder), having lifted the left side of Sir James his head and shoulder, and the said Philip the right side, his father's body though carefully cleaned, as said is so as the least blood was not on it, did (according to God's usual method of discovering murders) bleed afresh upon him, and defiled all his hands, which struck him with such a terror that he immediately let his father's head and body fall with violence, and fled from the body, and in consternation and confusion cried,

'Lord have mercy upon me' and bowed himself down over a seat in the church (where the corp were inspected), wiping his father's innocent blood off his own murdering hands upon his cloaths. To this his counsel replied, that 'this is but a superstitious observation, without any ground either in law or reason and Carpovius relates that several persons upon that ground had been unjustly challenged. It was, however insisted on as a link in the chain of evidence not as a merely singular circumstance, but as a miraculous interposition of Providence and it was thus unadverted upon by Sir George Mackenzie the king's counsel in his charge to the jury 'But they fully persuaded that Sir James was murdered by his own son sent out some chyrurgeons and friends, who having raised the body did see it bleed miraculously upon his touching it in which God Almighty Himself was pleased to bear a share in the testimonies we produce that Divine power, which makes the blood circulate during life, has oftentimes in all nations, opened a passage to it after death upon such occasions, but most in this case.'

NOTE 43 — SKINNERS YARDS, p 273

The Skinners Yard says Mr Morrison 'is still in the possession of that fraternity, and is applied to the purpose which its name implies. Prior to the time of the peaceable Robert, it was the courtyard of the castle. Part of the gate which opened from the town to the drawbridge of the castle is still to be seen, as well as some traces of the foundation of the keep or donjon, and of the towers which surrounded the castle-yard. The Curfew Row, which now incloses the Skinners Yard at that time formed the avenue or street leading from the northern part of the town to the Dominican monastery

NOTE 44 — EARL OF ERROL'S LODGINGS p 278

The Constable's, or Earl of Errol's, lodgings, says Mr Morrison stood near the south end of the Watergate the quarter of the town in which most of the houses of the nobility were placed amidst gardens which extended to the wall of the city adjoining the river. The families of the Hays had many rich possessions in the neighbourhood and other residences in the town besides that commonly known as the Constable's Lodgings. Some of these subsequently passed, along with a considerable portion of the carse, to the Ruthven or Gowrie family. The last of those noble residences in Perth which retained any part of its former magnificence (and on that account styled the Palace) was the celebrated Gowrie House, which was nearly

entire in 1805, but of which not a vestige now remains. On the confiscation of the Gowrie estates, it merged into the public property of the town, and in 1746 was presented by the magistrates to the Duke of Cumberland. His Royal Highness, on receiving this mark of the attachment or servility of the Perth rulers, asked, with sarcastic nonchalance, "If the *piece of ground* called the Carse of Gowrie went along with it?"'

NOTE 45 — SURVIVAL AFTER HANGING, p. 202

An incident precisely similar to that in the text actually occurred within the present century at Oxford, in the case of a young woman who underwent the last sentence of the law for child-murder. A learned professor of that university has published an account of his conversation with the girl after her recovery.

NOTE 46 — LINES OF OLD MAKER, p. 296

These lines are still extant in the ruinous house of an abbot, and are said to be allusive to the holy man having kept a mistress. [The house alluded to is Abbot's House, in May Gate, Dunfermline.]

NOTE 47 — HENRY WARDLAW, p. 301

Mastere Henry of Wardlaw
That like til vertew wes to draw,
Chantoure that tyme of Glasgu,
Commendit of alkyn vertew,
The Pape had in affectiounne,
Baith for his fame and his resowne

Sua be this resown speciale
Of the threttend Benet Pape,
This Mastere Henry wes Bischape
Of Sanct Andrewis with honoure
Of canone he wes then doctoure

Wyntoun, bk ix. chap. 23

NOTE 48 — TINE-EGAN, p. 307

Tine-egan, or neldfyre, *i e* forced fire. All the fires in the house being extinguished, two men produced a flame of potent virtue by the friction of wood. This charm was used, within the memory of living persons, in the Hebrides, in cases of murrain among cattle.

NOTE 49 — MOHR AR CHAT, p. 310

Mohr ar Chat, *i e* The Great Cat. The county of Caithness is supposed to have its name from Teutonic settlers of the race of the *Oatti*, and heraldry has not neglected so fair an occasion for that species of painted punning in which she used to delight. 'Touch not the cat but a glove,' is the motto of Mackintosh, alluding to his crest, which, as with most of the now scattered septs of the old Clan Chattan, is the mountain cat.

NOTE 50 — MACKAY & COUNTRY, p. 311

Their territory commonly called, after the chief of the Mackays, 'Lord Reay's country' has lately passed into the possession of the noble family of Stafford Sutherland.

NOTE 51 — LAKE ISLANDS p. 319

The security no less than the beauty of the situations led to the choice of these lake islands for religious establishments. Those in the Highlands were generally of a lively character and in many of them the monastic orders were tolerated and the rites of the Romish Church observed, long after the Reformation had swept both the rocks and their nests out of the Lowlands. The priory on Loch Tay was founded by Alexander I., and the care of it committed to a small body of monks but the last residents in it were three nuns, who when they did emerge into society seemed determined to enjoy it in its most complicated and noisy state for they came out only once a year and that to a market at Kenmore. Hence that fair is still called 'Fìell na mhan mairbh' or Holy Woman's Market.

NOTE 52. — DEASIL, p. 320

A very ancient custom, which consists in going three times round the body of a dead or living person imploring blessings upon him. The deasil must be performed sunways, that is, by moving, from right to left. If misfortune is imprecated the party moves withershins (German, *widersins*), that is, against the sun from left to right.

NOTE 53 — HIGHLAND FUNERAL CEREMONIES, p. 320

The installation, the marriage and the funeral of a chieftain were the three periods of his course observed with the highest ceremony by all the clan. The latter was perhaps the most imposing, of the three spectacles from the solemnity of the occasion and the thrilling effect produced by the coronach sung by hundreds of voices its melancholy notes undulating through the valleys or reverberating among the hills. All these observances are fading away and the occasional attempt at a gathering for the funeral of a chief now resembles the dying note of the coronach, faintly echoed for the last time among the rocks.

NOTE 54 — GRAIN DROPPING INTO PRISON, p. 370

Sir Alexander Ramsay of Dalhousie having irritated William Douglas, Lord of Galloway by obtaining the sheriffship of Teviotdale, which the haughty baron considered due to himself was surprised in Hawick while exercising his office, and confined in Hermitage Castle until he died of famine in June [July] 1742. [David Hume of] Godscroft [*House of Douglas* vol. I p. 170, ed. 1743] mentions the circumstance of the grain dropping from the corn loft.

NOTE 55 — MILK BOWIE, p. 380

i c A small milk pail. One of the sweetest couplets in *The Gentle Shepherd* [Act II sc. 4] is —

To bear the milk bowie nae pain was to me,
When I at the bughting forgather'd wi' thee.

NOTE 56 — RED-HAND, p 389

Mr Morrison says 'The case of a person taken "red-hand" by the magistrates of Perth and immediately executed was the main cause of the power of trying cases of life and death being taken from them and from all subordinate judicatories. A young English officer connected with some families of rank and influence, who was stationed with a recruiting party at Perth, had become enamoured of a lady there, so young as still to be under the tuition of a dancing-master. Her admirer was in the habit of following her into the school, to the great annoyance of the teacher, who, on occasion of a ball given in his class-room in the kirkgate, stationed himself at the door, determined to resist the entrance of the officer, on account of the scandal to which his visits had given rise. The officer came as a matter of course, and a scuffle ensued, which at last bore so threatening an aspect, that the poor dancing-master fled through the passage, or "close," as it is called, by which there was access to the street. He was pursued by the officer with his drawn sword, and was run through the body ere he could reach the street, where the crowd usually assembled on such occasions might have protected him. The officer was instantly apprehended, and executed, it is understood, even without any form of trial, at least there is no notice of it in any of the records where it would with most probability have been entered. But the sword is still in the possession of a gentleman whose ancestors held official situations in the town at the time, and the circumstances of the murder and of the execution have been handed down with great minuteness and apparent truth of description from father to son. It was immediately afterwards that the power of the civic magistrates in matters criminal was abridged, it is thought chiefly through the influence of the friends of this young officer.'

NOTE 57 — HOUGHMANSTARES, p 398

'This place, twice referred to in the course of our story as hateful to the Highlanders, lies near the Stare dam, a collection of waters in a very desolate hollow between the Hill of Birnam and the road from Perth to Dunkeld. The eeriness of the place is indescribable, and is rendered yet more striking from its being within a furlong of one of the loveliest and richest scenes in Scotland—the north-west opening of Strathmore. The "dam" has been nearly drained within these few years, but the miserable patches of sickly corn which have with vast labour and cost been obtained look still more melancholy than the solitary tarn which the barren earth seems to have drunk up. The whole aspect of the place fitted it for being the scene of the trial and punishment of one of the most notorious bands of thieves and outlaws that ever laid the Low Country under contribution. Ruthven the sheriff, is said to have held his court on a rising ground to the north, still called the Court-hill, and there were lately, or there still may be, at the east end of the Roch-in-roy wood, some oaks on which the Highlanders were hung, and which long went by the name of the Hanged-men's-trees. The hideous appearance of the bodies hanging in chains gave the place a name which to this day grates on the ear of a Celt'—MORRISON

NOTE 58 — GARDENS OF THE DOMINICANS, p 408

'The gardens of the Dominicans surrounded the monastery on all sides, and were of great extent and beauty. Part of them immediately adjoined the North Inch, and covered all that space of ground now occupied by Atholl Place, the Crescent, and Rose Terrace, besides a considerable extent

of ground to the west and south, still known by the name of the Blackfriars. On a part of these grounds overlooking the North Inch, probably near the south end of the Terrace, a richly decorated summer house stood, which is frequently mentioned in old writings as the Giltten Arbour. From the balconies of this edifice King Robert is supposed to have witnessed the conflict of the clans. What the peculiar forms, construction, or ornaments of this building were, which gained for it this title, is not even hinted at by any of the local chroniclers. It may be mentioned, however although it is a matter of mere tradition, that the ornaments on the ceiling of the Monks' Tower (a circular watch tower at the south-east angle of the town) were said to have been copied from those on the Giltten Arbour, by orders of the first Earl of Gowrie at the corner of whose garden the Monks Tower stood. This tower was taken down at the same time with Gowrie House, and many yet remember the general appearance of the paintings on the ceiling, yet it does not seem to have occurred to any one to have had them copied. They were allegorical and astronomical, representing the virtues and vices, the seasons, the zodiac, and other subjects commonplace enough yet even the surmise that they might have been copied from others still more ancient, if it could not save them from destruction, should have entitled them to a greater share than they seem to have possessed of the notice of their contemporaries. The patience with which the antiquaries of Perth have submitted to the removal (in many cases the wanton and useless removal) of the historical monuments with which they were at one time surrounded is truly wonderful! — MORRISON.

NOTE 50 — THE BLACK CHANTER, p 421

The present [in 1831] Cluny MacPherson, chief of his clan, is in possession of this ancient trophy of their presence at the North Inch. Another account of it is given by a tradition, which says, that an aerial minstrel appeared over the heads of the Clan Chattan and, having played some wild strains, let the instrument drop from his hand. Being made of glass it was broken by the fall excepting only the chanter, which, as usual, was of lignum vitæ. The MacPherson piper secured this enchanted pipe, and the possession of it is still considered as ensuring the prosperity of the clan.

NOTE 60 — COMBAT ON THE NORTH INCH, p 425

The reader may be amused with the account of this onslaught in Boece [bk. xvi chap 9], as translated by Bellenden —

At this time, makil of all the north of Scotland was hevely trublit be two clannis of Irmene, namit Clankayis and Glenquhattanis, invading the cuntre, be thair weris, with ithand slaughter and reif. At last, it was appointit betwix the holdis-men of thir two clannis, be advise of the Erlis of Murray and Crawford, that xxx of the principall men of the ta clan sal cum, with othir xxx of the tothir clan, arrayit in thair best aris, and sall convene afore the king at Perth, for decisioun of al pleis, and fecht with schairp swardis to the deith, but ony harness; and that clan quhair the victory succedit to have perpetuall empire above the tothir. Baith thir clannis, glaid of this condition, come to the North Inche, beside Perth, with jugis set in scaffaldis, to discuss the verite. Ane of thir clannis wantit ane man to perfurnis furth the nowmer, and wagit ane caril, for money, to debait thair actioun, howbeit this man pertent na thing to thaim in blind nor kindnes. Thir two clannis stude arrayit with gret hatrent aganis othir; and, be sound of trumpet ruschit togildder, takand na respect to thair woundis, sa that thay micht distroy thair ennemis; and faucht in this maner lang, with uncertane victory quhen ane fel, ane othir was put in his rowine. At last the Clankayis war al alane except ane that awam throw the watter of Tay. Of Glenquhattanis was left xi persons on live, bot thay war sa hurt, that thay micht nocht hald thair swardis in thair handis. This debait was fra the incarnation, mcccxcvi yeris.

The death of the Duke of Rothsay is not accompanied with the circumstances detailed by later writers in Wyntoun's *The Chronicle of Lochleven* says simply. —

A thousand foure hundyr yeris and twa,
All before as ye herd done
Oure lord the king, is eldest sone,
Suete and vertuous, yong and fair,
And his nerast lauchful ayr,
Honest, habil, and avenand,
Oure lord, oure pryncie, in all pleand,
Cunnand into letteraturc,
A seymly persone in stature,
Schir Davy Duke of Rothsay,
Of Marchis the seyn and twenty day
Yauld his saule til his Creatoure,
His cors til hallowit sepulture
In Lundoris his body lyeis,
His spirito intil Paradys

Bk ix. chap 23

The Continuator of Fordun is far more particular, and, though he does not positively pronounce on the guilt of Albany, says [lib xv cap 12] enough to show that, when he wrote, the suspicion against him was universal, and that Sir John Ramorny was generally considered as having followed the dark and double course ascribed to him in the novel

Anno Domini millesimo quadringentesimo primo, obiit columna ecclesiæ robustissima, vas eloquentiæ, et thesaurus scientiæ, ac defensor catholicæ fidei, dominus Walterus Treyl, episcopus S. Andrew, et etiam Domina Anabella regina apud Sconam decessit, et sepulta est in Dunfermyne. Hi enim duo, dum viverent, honorem quasi regni revocantes, alienigenas et extraneos egregiè susceptantes et convivantes, re munificè reginæ Scotiæ, comite de Douglas, et episcopo Sancti Andrew, ablit decus, recessit honor, et honestas obiit Scotiæ. Eodem anno quarta mortalitas exstitit in regno Paulo ante dominus rex in consilio deputavit certos consiliarios, valentes, barones et milites, juratos ad regendum et consiliandum, Dominum David Stewart, ducem Rothimiscobat se sæpius effrenatis lusbis et levioribus ludiciis, quia videbatur regi et consilio quod consilio astrictus saniori, juravit se regimini eorum et consilio conformare. Sed mortuâ reginâ ipsius nobili matre, quæ eum in multis refrænabat, tanquam laqueus contritus totum dedit. Propter quod consilium procerum sibi assignatum quitabit se regi, et si voluisset, non tamen posse se eum ad gravitatem morum flexisse attestatur. Unde rex impotens, et decrepitu scriptis fratri suo duci Albanie, gubernatori regni, ut seipsum melius cognosceret. Non enim osculatur filium pater, sed aliquando castigat litera regalis ad gubernatorem de facto ostendit, se incentorem et instigatorem regi ut taliter demandaret, quod honori alterius obviaret, sicut experientiâ exitus rei patefecit. Domini enim Willelmus Lindesay de Rossy et Johannes Remorgeney milites, regis etiam, ut dicitur, duci Rothsaïensi prius suggesserunt, ut, post obitum episcopi Sancti Andrew, castrum suum ad usum regis, quousque novus episcopus institueretur, reciperet et servaret, quique ipsum ducem, nihil mali præmeditatum, ad castrum Sancti Andrew simpliciter, et cum moderata familia, equitantes, inter villam de Nidl et Stratyrum arrestaverunt, et per potentiam eundem ducem ad ipsum castrum Sancti Andrew, sibi ad deliberandum paratum, induxerunt, et ibidem in custodia tenuerunt, quousque dux Albanie cum suo consilio apud Culros tento, quid de eo facerent, deliberaverunt. Qui quidem dux Albanie, cum domino Archibaldo II comite de Douglas, manu validâ ipsum ad turrim de Faulkland, jumento impositum et russeto colloquio chlamidatum transvexerunt, ubi in quadam honesta camerula eum servandum deputaverunt. In qua tam diu custoditus, scilicet per Johannem Selkirk et Johannem

Wrycht, donec dysenteris, sive, ut alii volunt, fame tabefactus, finem vite dedit vii Kal. Aprilis, in vigilia Pasche, sero, sive in die Pasche summo mane, et sepultus est in Londonia. Præmissus verò Johannes Remorgeny tam principi, quam domino regi, erat consiliarius, audax spiritu, et pronuntiatione eloquentissimus, ac in ardua causis prolocutor regia, et caudicibus disertissimus, qui, ut dicitur, ante hæc suggerat ipsi principi duci Rothsalenæ, ut patrum suum ducem Albanis arrearet, et, qualicumque occasione nactis, statim de medio tolleret quod facere omnino princeps refutavit. Istud attendens miles, malitiæ suæ fulgine occæcatus, à ceptis desistere nequivit, huiusmodi labe attachiatus quæ, ut ait Chrysostomus, 'Ooërcari omnino nequit animus pravæ semel voluntate vitiatæ.' Et ideo, vice versa, pallium in alterum humerum convertens, hoc idem maleficium ducem Albanis de nepote suo duce Rothsalenæ facere instruxit, aliis sine fallo, ut asseruit, dux Rothsalenæ de ipso finem facturum fulset. Dictus insuper Dominus Willielmus Lindesay cum ipso Johanne Remorgeny in eandem sententiam fortè consentivit, pro eo quòd dictus dux Rothsalenæ sororem ipsius Domini Willielmi Euphamiam de Lindesay affidavit, sed per sequentia aliarum matrimonii attemptata, sicut et filiam comitis Marchiæ, alio eandem repudiavit. Ipse enim, ut æstimo, est ille David, de quo vates de Breclington sic vaticinatus est, dicens,

Psalletur gestis David luxuria festis,
Quòd tenet uxores uxore suâ maiores,
Deficient mores regales, perdet honores.

Paulo ante captionem suam apparuit mirabilia cometes, emittens ex se radios crinitos ad aquilonem tendentes. Ad quam visendum, cum primò apparet, quodam vespere in castro de Edinburgh cum aliis ipse dux sedens, fertur ipsum alio de stella discursasse, dicens, 'Ut à mathematicis audivi, huiusmodi cometes, cum apparet, signat mortem vel mutationem alicujus principis, vel alicujus patris destructionem.' Et sic evenit ut prædixit. Nam, duce capto, statim in præjacentem materiam, sicut Deus voluit, rediit stella. In hoc potuit iste dux Sibylla prophetiæ comparari, de qua alio loquitur Claudianus

Miror cur aliis quæ fata pandere soles,
Ad propriam cladem cæca Sibylla taces

The narrative of Boece attaches murder distinctly to Albany. After mentioning the death of Queen Annabella Drummond, he thus proceeds [bk. xvi chap 13] —

Be quhals deith, succedit gret displeasir to hir son, David, Duk of Rotheay for, during hir life, he wes haldin in virtuous and honest occupation, eftir hir deith, he began to rage in all manner of insolence, and fulyeit virgins, matrons, and nunns, be his unbridillit lust. At last, King Robert, informant of his young and insolent maneris, send letteris to his brothir, the Duke of Albany, to intertene his said son, the Duk of Rotheay, and to leir him honest and civil maneris. The Duk of Albany, glaid of hir writhingis, tuk the Duk of Rotheay betwix Dundee and Sanct Androis, and brocht him to Falkland, and includit him in the tour thair, but ony meit or drink. It is said ane woman, havand commiseratioun on this Duk, leit mell fall down throw the loftis of the toure, be quhilkis his life wes certane dayis savit. This woman, fra it wes knawin, wes put to deith. On the same maner, ane othir woman galf him milk of hir paup, throw ane lang reid; and wes slane with gret crueltie, fra it wes knawin. Than wes the Duke destitute of all mortall supplie, and brocht, finalie, to sa miserable and hungry appetite, that he eit, nocht allanerlie the filth of the toure quhare he wes, bot his awin fingaris, to his gret marderdoms. His body wes beryit in Lundoris, and kithit miraklis mony yeris eftir; quhill, at last, King James the First began to punis his slayaris, and fra that time furth the miraklis celsit.

The remission which Albany and Douglas afterwards received at the hands of Robert III was first printed by Lord Hailes, and is as follows —

Robertus, Dei gratia, rex Scottorum, universalis, ad quorum notitiam presentes littere pervenerint, salutem in Domino sempiternam — Cum nuper carissimè nobis Robertus Albanus Dux, Comes de Fife et de Menteth frater noster germanus, et Archibaldus Comes de Douglas, et Dominus Galwidia filius noster secundum legem, ratione filia nostra quam duxit in uxorem, precarissimum filium nostrum primogenitum David, quondam Ducem Rothayæ ac Comitem de Carrick et Atholis capti fecerunt, et personaliter arrestari, et in castro Sancti Andree primo custodiri deindeque apud Haucland in custodia detineri ubi ab hac luce divina providentia, et non aliter, ingrasso dignocitur. Quibus comparentibus coram nobis in concilio nostro generali apud Edinburgh, decimo sexto die mensis Maii anno Domini millesimo

quadringentesimo secundo, inchoato, et nonnullis diebus continuato, et super hoc interrogatis ex officio nostro regali, sive accusatis, hujusmodi captionem, arrestationem, mortem, ut superius est expressum, consistentes, causas ipsos ad hoc moventes, pro publica, ut asseruerunt, utilitate arctantes, in presentia nostra assignarunt, quas non duximus presentibus inserendas, et ex causis. Habitis deinde super hoc diligenti inquisitione, consideratis omnibus et singulis in hac parte considerandis, hujusmodi causam tangentibus, et maturis deliberatione concilii nostri prehabitis discussis, prenotatos Robertum fratrem nostrum germanum, Archibaldumque filium nostrum secundum jura, et eorum in hac parte participes quoscunque, viz arrestatores, detentores, custodes, consiliarios, et omnes alios consilium, videlicet, auxilium, vel favorem eisdem prestantes, sive eorum jussum aut mandatum qualitercunque exsequentes, excusatos habemus, necnon et ipsos, et eorum quemlibet, a crimine læsæ majestatis nostræ, vel alio quocunque crimine, culpa, injuria, rancore, et offensa, quæ eis occasione præmissorum imputari possent qualitercunque, in dicto consilio nostro palam et publice declaravimus, pronuntiavimus, et diffinivimus, tenoreque præsentium declaramus, pronunciamus, et per hanc diffinitivam nostram sententiam diffinimus, innocentes, innoxios, inculpabiles, quietos, liberos, et immunes, penitus et omnimodo. Et si quam contra ipsos, sive eorum aliquem, aut aliquam vel aliquos, in hoc facto qualitercunque participes, vel eis quomodolibet adherentes, indignationem, iram, rancorem, vel offensionem, concepimus qualitercunque, illos proprio motu, ex certa scientia, et etiam ex deliberatione concilii nostri jam dicti, annullamus, removemus, et annullatos volumus haberi, in perpetuum. Quare omnibus et singulis subditis nostris, cujuscunque status aut conditionis exstiterint, districtè præcipimus et mandamus, quatenus sæpe dictis Roberto et Archibaldo, eorumque in hoc facto participibus, consentientibus, seu adherentibus, ut præmittatur, verbo non detrahant, neque facto, nec contra eosdem murmurent qualitercunque, unde possit eorum bona fama lædi, vel aliquod præjudicium generari, sub omni pœna quæ exinde competere poterit, quomodolibet ipso jure. Datum, sub testimonio magni sigilli nostri, in monasterio Sanctæ Crucis de Edinburgh, vicesimo die mensis Maii prædicti, anno Domini millesimo quadringentesimo secundo, et regni nostri anno tertio decimo.

Lord Hailes sums up his comment on the document with words which, as Pinkerton says, leave no doubt that he considered the Prince as having been murdered, viz 'The Duke of Albany and the Earl of Douglas obtained a remission in terms as ample as if they had actually murdered the heir-apparent' [*Annals of Scotland*, App Second, No IX (vol iii 1797)]

GLOSSARY

OF

WORDS, PHRASES, AND ALLUSIONS

- ABBAS LETTLE, ABRE DE LIESE.** See LIESE, Abbé de
- ABERROTHOCK,** now called Arbroath, in Forfarshire
- ACHAIVE, AUCHY, or EOCHA,** an early king of Scotland, a contemporary and ally of Charlemagne
- ACOTON,** a quilted vest or tunic, worn between the coat-of-mail and the body
- ADHUC SUB JUDICE LIT EST,** the matter is still a subject of discussion
- AIKER, ACRE,** field
- AIX, OWN**
- ALBYN,** the ancient native name of Scotland
- ALBYN,** all kind of
- ALLANKERLIN,** only
- ALLAY,** to mix with, dilute
- ALMAN, or ALLEMAGNE,** Germany
- ALMOWER,** the distributor of alms
- ALTER EGO,** other or second self hence, a very close intimate
- AMERCIAMENT** a fine
- AMIRAL,** admiral
- ANZ, ONE**
- ANGUS,** the ancient name of Forfarshire
- ARINETTA,** an Italian dance
- A SECRETIS,** a private secretary
- ASSAY,** trial of the fatness (grease) of a deer
- ASSOLVIZ,** to acquit, pronounce free from sin
- ASSETTMENT,** a fine for bloodshed, paid to the nearest relatives of the slain person
- AUSTICIOUS,** astute, crafty
- AUTOMATHES, or The Capacity and Extent of the Human Understanding, exemplified in the Extraordinary Case of Automathes,** etc., a philosophical romance by John Kirky (London, 1745)
- AVE,** a prayer to the Virgin, beginning with this Latin word, which means Hail!
- AVEMAND,** elegant in person and manners
- AVISE,** fashion, manner, advice
- AYR, HAIR**
- BACK BEARAND,** a thief caught in the act of carrying away stolen goods on his back
- BADENHOCH,** a mountainous district in the southeast of Inverness-shire
- BAILLIE, Miss JOANNA.** The allusion on p. x does not agree with any passage in Miss Baillie's dramas on Fear—Orra, Oserloo, and Valderverde
- BALL, PARSON,** one of the popular leaders in Wat Tyler's rebellion, 1381
- BALLETS (p. 14),** ballads
- BARRACK,** the lists or in closure for tournaments
- BARRERIE,** barriers, lists
- HAS AIR SON EACHIN,** death for Hector
- BEADSMAN,** a licensed beggar, public almsman.
- BELL-THE-CAT,** to do a bold and risky thing See further Glossary to The Betrothed
- BENEDICTITE,** Be ye blessed; bless me!
- BESTIAL,** cattle, sheep, and so forth
- BETID,** happened, came to pass
- BIELDRED,** sheltered, protected
- BKEYFIE,** a double portion of food
- BIGGIN,** a linen cap, hood
- BIGGIN,** a building
- BINK,** a range of shelves for holding dishes, etc.
- BLACK-JACK,** a tough leather jerkin
- BLOOD BOLTERED,** clotted with blood
- BLOOD-WIT,** more correctly BLOOD-WITE, a penalty for bloodshed, paid to the king
- BODDLE FRIN,** a toilet pin that cost a boddle, a small Scotch copper coin = ½d. English
- BONA ROMA,** a courtesan, showy wanton
- BONUS SOCIUS,** a comrade, mate
- BORDELLER,** a frequenter of brothels
- BORREL,** rustic, common
- BOUNTITH,** something given over and above the usual wages, a bounty
- BOW HAND,** the wrong side
- BOWIE,** a small wooden milk pail
- BRATTACH,** the standard of a Highland clan
- BRATE,** a bravado affront
- BROCKAN,** bracken, fern leaves
- BREMY BROWED,** with a smooth and beautiful forehead

- BREWIS**, bread or toasted oatmeal soaked in the fatty scum of broth
- BRIDGE (AT PERTH)** SWEEP AWAY (p 31), during a great flood in 1210 This refers to an older bridge That standing at the date of this tale was erected by Robert Bruce in 1329, and was carried away by a flood in 1621
- BROGUES**, Highland shoes of untanned leather
- BROOK**, to enjoy, hold
- BROSE**, oatmeal over which boiling water has been poured, so as to make a coarse porridge
- BUCHANAN**, George, wrote in Latin a *History of Scotland* (1552)
- BUGHTING**, the folding of the ewes for milking at evening
- BURGAGE TENEMENT**, property held under the crown in a royal burgh
- BUSK**, to dress, deck, smarten up oneself
- BUT** (in the motto 'Touch not the cat but a glove'), without, **BUT DOUT**, without doubt, **BUT ONY HARNES**, without defensive armour
- CAILLACH**, an old woman
- CAIRNTABLE**, a hill on the borders of Ayrshire and Lanarkshire, on the north-eastern slope of which stood Douglas's castle
- CAMPVÈRE**, or **CAMPFIRE**, on the Dutch island of Walcheren, was the seat of a specially favoured Scottish trading factory from 1444 to 1795
- CARLE**, **CARLL**, a fellow, man
- CARPZOVIVS** There were several eminent German jurists of this name in the 16th and 17th centuries
- CARSE**, a fertile tract of land beside a river, as the Carse of Gowrie, beside the Tay, stretching from Perth to Dundee
- CARSGLOGE**, **KNIGHT OF**, an ancestor of the family of Clephane, whose mansion stood at Caralogie near Cupar in Fifeshire
- CATERAN**, or **CATHERAN**, a Highland robber
- CAVEY**, or **CAVIE** a hen-coop
- CHATELET**, or **CHASTELARD**, **PIERRE DE BOSLOCEL DE**, French poet, executed in 1563 for professing a criminal passion for Mary Queen of Scots
- CHEVRON**, a glove
- CLANJAMFREY**, low, worthless people, trumpery folk
- COCHRANE**, **ROBERT**, an architect originally, became favourite of James III, and reputed Earl of Mar, slain in 1432 by the Scottish nobles. See Scott's *Tales of a Grandfather*, chap xxii
- COGGING**, cheating, lying, wheedling
- COLDINGHAM**, a town on the coast of Berwickshire
- COMMODITY** (p 39), material advantage
- CORBIE**, a raven
- CORDWAINER**, a worker in Cordovan leather, shoemaker
- CORRICHE DNU**, the dark glen, corrie
- COSTARD**, the head, a term implying contempt
- COUTEAU DE CHASSE**, a hunting-knife, hanger
- COVINE**, a secret or collusive agreement
- CRABBE**, **THE FLEMISH ENGINEER**. A Flemish engineer named Crab defended Berwick against the English after it was captured by the Scots in 1317
- CRIPPLING**, hobbling, walking lamely
- CUMBER**, a disturbance, embarrassment
- CUMMER**, a gossip, companion
- CUNNAND**, skilful, knowing
- CURRAGH**, a light skiff, made of a hide stretched over wicker-work or the lopped branches of a tree
- CURSUS MEDENDI**, a course of medical study
- CURTAL AXE**, a short curved sword or cutlass
- CYNANCHE TRACHEALIS**, the croup
- DALMATIC**, a loose ecclesiastical vestment with wide sleeves
- DALRIADS**, an ancient Celtic race of Scots, who passed over from Ireland into Scotland in the 6th century
- DAN** (*Bacchus*), a title of honour, much used by the old English poets
- DANDER**, cinder, refuse of the forge
- DAOINE SHIE**, fairy folk
- DARE LUCEM**, to throw light upon, decide positively
- DARGUE**, or **DARG**, a task, work
- DAULT**, a foster son
- DEASIL**, circling round a thing the same way as the sun goes, that is, from right to left
- DEBART**, to strive, fight
- DEEOSHED**, debauched
- DEIL**, to share, distribute
- DEY-WOMAN**, a dairy-maid
- DINGING**, knocking, hammering
- DINK**, saucy, contemptuous, scornful of others
- DITAY**, **IN**, under indictment
- DIVAN**, a council
- DOMINUS**, sir
- DONALD OF THE ISLES**, claimed the power and rank of an independent sovereign over the Western Isles and part of the mainland of Scotland, was defeated by the Earl of Mar at the battle of Harlaw, in 1411
- DOUCE**, fair, honest
- DOUR**, stubborn, intractable
- DOURLACH**, a Highland knapsack
- DOUT**, doubt
- DOUZE**, twelve, **DOUZE PEERS**, the twelve peers or paladins of Charlemagne, celebrated in mediæval romance
- DOWAIRE**, dowager
- DREED A SORE WEIRD**, paid a severe penalty
- DROMOND**, a large transport vessel
- DUNNIEWASSAL**, a Highland gentleman
- DUPPLIN**, **CASTLE OF**, seat of the Earl of Kinnoul, about 6 miles south-west from Perth,
- EARISH**, **ERISH**, or **ERSE**, Gaelic, Highland
- EARN**, a river of Perthshire, joins the Tay south of Perth
- ENTRY**, an interlude, dance introduced between two parts of an entertainment, the persons who dance an entry
- EPHEMERIDES**, a table showing the daily positions of the planets
- ERROL**, **EARLS OF**, were hereditary Constables of

- Scotland *See* FROD, in
Glossary to *Redgauntlet*
FRUIT PORT, a freethinker
FRYMON, the root, original
form of a word
FUMKUX, the wineherd of
Odysseus
EXHERRADATION, a disin-
heriting
- FABLIAU, a tale in verse,
usually satirical
FAITOUR, an evil-doer,
scoundrel
FAR KIL ALISON EACHIN,
another for Hector
FARRAGON, a mountain, 2560
feet high, near Aberfeldy
in Perthshire
FASTEN'S EY, the evening
preceding the Lent fast,
that is, Shrove Tuesday
FAUCUT, fought
FECUT, fight
FEDDEAN DRU, black chanter
(of a bagpipe)
FEE AND BOUNTITH, wages
and a gratuitous present
FELNY, or FELONT, wrath,
fierceness
FET, doomed, predestined
FIDDLE, KING WHO PLAYED
UPON, etc. *See* King, etc.
FIEL MA M'HAU MAONE, holy
woman's market, that is,
Kenmore Fair
FIERY CROSS. *See* Scott's
Lady of the Lake, Canto iii.
FINLAINCO, or FINLARIO,
near the mouth of the
river Lochy, at the west
end of Loch Tay
FIR MAN ORD, the man of the
hammer, smith
FLASKET, a long shallow
basket & small flask
FLYTH SHE, FLING SHE,
whether she scold or kick,
give way to a fit of anger
FOYN, to thrust, stab
FOREHAMMER, sledge-
hammer
FORTINGALL, a village near
Loch Tay, in the north-
west of Perthshire
FRENIE, friars
FROWY, surly, peevish
FULYKIE, defiled
- GABBART, or GABHARD, a
kind of heavy lighter
GAFFER, a contraction of
grandfather — a familiar,
affectionate title
GALLIARD, a gallant
GALLIARDISE, merriment,
galley
- GALLOGGLASS, or GALLOW
GLASS, a heavy-armed
Highlander
GALLOW-SLEE, the place
where the gallows was set
up
GALWEGIAN, natives of
Galloway, the old name
for the south west of
Scotland, the Douglas's
country
GAZEBOUN, a hound that
hunts by sight
GEAR, goods, property, busi-
ness, work
GENTLE CRAFT OF ST CRIS-
PIN, the shoemaker's. *See*
further St. Crispin below
GIRNEL, a granary, store-
house
GIRTH, an asylum, sanctuary
GLIBB, or GLIB, a bushy head
of hair
GLOOM, to look sullen at,
frown at
GOOSECAP, a silly person
GOSSIPED, intimacy, fami-
liar friendship
GOUGE, a wench
GOUT or GOUTIE, a drop
GOVERNANTE, a house-
keeper
GOW Gaelic for 'smith';
GOW CHROM, Bandy legged
Smith
GOWRIE, CONSPIRACY OF, a
reputed attempt of the
Earl of Gowrie and his
brother to kidnap and
slay James VI at Perth
in 1600
GRADDAN CAKE, a cake made
of toasted or parched corn
GRATIN, implements, equip-
ment
GREGORY THE GREAT, pope
and father of the Church
in the 6th century
GREVE, the place of public
executions in Paris
GUD, or GOOD, WOMEN OF
women of respectability
GYRES, RING OF, made him
who wore it invisible.
Gyges was king of ancient
Lydia in Asia Minor
- HABERGON, a short coat of
ringed mail or armour,
without sleeves
HAHL, able, fit
HAFFIS, the temples, the
face between the cheeks
and ears
HAILL, whole
HALLOWMASE, All Saints'
Day, the 1st of November
HAND-HARND, a thief taken
with the stolen goods in
his possession
HANK OVER, means of com-
pulsion against, handle
against
HARD, refuse, coarse ends
of flax, hemp, wool
HARROW, or HARO, a cry of
distress, shout for help
HAUDREX, a coat of mail
without sleeves
HAVAND, having
HAY, TOKE OF, AT LONGARTY
See Longarty, etc.
HEIDIS MEN, head men,
chiefs
HER MAINSEL, my own self
HIE, high
HIMY, honey, a term of
affection or endearment
HOBLEME, should properly
be HOBBY, a strong, active
horse of medium size
HOBLESHOW, or HUNBLE-
SHOW, a tumult, hubbub
HOLIDAME, an incorrect
form of MALDOME, some-
thing (a relic, saint) that
is regarded as holy
HOLPED UP, helped, sup-
ported; as used ironically
on p. 312, embarrassed
HON, to lament, moan
HOSTING, a mustering of
armed men
HUNT'S UP, a call on the
hunting-horn under a
sportsman's window of a
morning, to warn him it's
time to be up and off to
the hounds
- ILL MAN FORTIE, etc. (p.
200), he, strong of hand,
shall play in the English
gardens
INCH, island. The Inch of
Perth is not now an island,
but a level expanse of
greensward
INCLUAT, shut up
IN EXTREMIS, at the last gasp
INWANG AND OUTWANG, the
right of a baron or cor-
poration to try thieves,
equally whether taken
(with the booty) in or
outside of his (its) own
jurisdiction
INNOCENTS', Innocents' Day,
the 28th of December
IN PRINCIPIO, beginning (to
speak), manner of speech
INTERTENE, to take another
into one's own house,
maintain
ITHAND, or YTHAND, busy,
constant

- JACKMEN**, military retainers, men wearing jacks or armour
- JACQUEMY**, a rising of the peasants of central France against the oppression of the nobles in 1358
- JEDWOOD**, the district around Jedburgh
- JILT**, or **JILLET**, a gay, lively young woman
- JOLTERHEADED**, stupid, thick-headed
- KAIN HEN**, or **CAIN HEN**, a duty in kind (a hen) paid by a tenant to his landlord
- KEDDIE'S RING** See note 16, p. 411
- KEMPE**, or **KEMP**, a champion, warrior of renown
- KEY**, to know
- KENNEL**, gutter
- KERNE**, a light-armed Highlander
- KING WHO PLAYED UPON THE FIDDLE**, etc. (p. 82), the Roman Emperor Nero
- KIRSTENING**, christening, baptizing
- KITHIT**, or **KYTHED**, produced, caused
- KNIGHT**, knight
- LA BELLE FRANCE**, beautiful France
- LAI**, a favourite form of song current amongst the minstrels of the North of France
- LANDLOOPER**, an adventurer, vagrant
- LANDWARD**, the rural parts of a town parish
- LAUCHFUL**, lawful
- LAVERDERE**, washerwoman
- LAWING**, an inn reckoning
- LEDNOCH**, or **LYNEDOC**, a seat in a picturesque situation near the river Almond, a few miles north-west of Perth. It is associated with the memory of Bessy Bell and Mary Gray, celebrated in Scottish song
- LEICHTACH**, a body guard
- LEIR**, or **LARE**, to teach
- LEVIN-BOLT**, lightning
- LEYDEN**, Dr., poet and Oriental scholar, a friend of Scott
- LIDDEL**, a river in the south of Scotland, flowing through Roxburghshire and Dumfriesshire
- LIESSE**, **ABBÉ DE**, a burlesque dignitary, elected every season of carnival by a society of Arras in the north of France
- ISMAIL**, or **LIMAI**, a countried, worthless fellow
- LIMONDS**, or **LEAT OF**, now a ruin, stood on the south bank of the Tay, in the north-west of Fifeshire
- LINT**, a, making notches in
- LIRN**, a joint, limb
- LOADING**, a narrow street or lane
- LOCHABER AXE**, a bill like blade, with a hook at the back of it, both mounted on a long shaft
- LOCHILL**, the territorial designation of the chief of the Cameron clan
- LOCKMAY** See Note 11, p. 447
- LOFTS**, lofts, storeys
- LOOL**, **CATHARINE**, correctly **MARGARET**, mistress, afterwards wife, of King David II
- LOUNCY**, or **LUNCARTY**, 4 miles from Perth, where in the reign of Kenneth III (end of 10th century) the Danes were defeated by the Scots, the victory being principally due to the prowess of a peasant and his sons, who were ploughing close by, and who used their oxen yokes as weapons. To him the Hays, Earls of Errol, trace their descent
- LOON**, a fellow, a woman of easy virtue, mistress
- LORD OF THE MARCHES**, a king's officer charged to defend and govern the Border frontier next England
- LORDS OF THE ARTICLES**, a permanent committee of the Scottish Parliament from the end of the 14th century to 1690, who drafted such measures as it was proposed to bring before Parliament in the next session
- LUG AND THE HORN**, ear and the horn, as if he were an animal
- LUNDORIS**. See **Lindores**
- LURDANE**, a good-for-nothing fellow
- MA**, more
- MA BELLE TENEBROSA**, my lovely brunette
- MACCALLANMORE**, the patronymic of the house of Argyll
- MAHON** or **A.D. TERMAHON**, in the medieval mystery plays a couple of refractory devils, the former being intended to represent the Prophet Mahomet, the latter a Mohammedan devil
- MAIL**, or **MAILS**, baggage, luggage
- MAIR**, a cock fighting match, **WELSH MAIR**, a cock fight of sixteen birds on each side, which was continued winner against winner, until only one was left alive
- MAIR**, in Scotland, the messenger of a county (sheriff's) court
- MAIST**, most
- MAJON**, or **MAIR**, **JOHN**, wrote in Latin a *History of Scotland* (1521)
- MAKEN**, a poet
- MALCOLM THE MAIDEN**, **Malcolm IV** (1114-1165), king of Scotland
- MAL-TALENT**, ill-humour, resentment
- MALVOISIE**, a sweet wine, grown on the islands of the *Egryn*, generally called *malmsay*
- MAMMOCK**, a fragment, shapeless piece
- MANGOVER**, a military catapult for hurling stones, etc.
- MARGARET, QUEEN**, great-niece of Edward the Confessor and wife of Malcolm Canmore, king of Scotland, celebrated for her exemplary piety and love for the Church
- MARISCHAL TAEN**, sewer or server of the mess
- MARK**, or **MERE**, a coin = in Scotland 1½d., in England 13s. 4d.
- MASSAMORE**, the principal dungeon of a feudal castle. *Compare* Proximus est, etc., below
- MAUN**, must
- MAY**, maid, maiden
- MEAL VERNEL**, **Meal Alley**, a principal street in Perth
- MEKIL**, or **MUCKLE**, much, a great part
- MEREK**. See **Mark**
- MESSAN**, a mongrel, cur
- METHEGLIN**, a drink made of honey and water, boiled, fermented, and spiced
- MIRK**, dark
- MISTER**, manner of, sort of
- MOHR AB CHAT**, the great cat
- MONTAGU**, **LADY MARY WORTLEY**, a beauty and

- wit, the friend of Pope and Addison, and author of celebrated *Letters* (1763)
- MUMPKER, a beggar, stroller
- MUTH AND MAD, utterly exhausted in body and spirits
- MUTTON, FRENCH, a French gold coin = Ga. 8d., so called from its being impressed with the image of a lamb
- NAIN, NAINREL, HER, OWN, my own self
- NEIDFYRE, forced fire See *Tine-egan*
- NEAREST, nearest, next
- NORLE, an old English gold coin = Ga. 8d.
- NOM NOSTRUM EST, it's not our business (to decide the question)
- NOWMKE, number
- OCCURRENT, an event, incident, occurrence
- OPIFERQUE PER ORREM DICOR, I am called one that brings aid (i.e. the healer) the world over
- OUTFANG. See *Infang*
- OUTLINER, or OUTLER, an animal that lies out in the fields, especially in winter, hence one who stays outside of his own house at night
- PACKING AND PHILING, unfair trading, as when a freeman of a borough grants the use of his name for trading purposes to one who is not a freeman
- PANTLER, the officer who had care of the bread or the pantry
- PAN AMOURS, in illicit love
- PASSEMENTED, ornamented with lace, embroidery
- PAUGHTY, or FAUGHTIE, proud, haughty, unsapient
- PAUP, pap, nipple
- PAVASE, a large triangular shield
- PAVIER, a lively motion, like those of a dancer
- PEAT, a wilful and proud young woman
- PELLACE, a porpoise
- PENNANT, THOMAS, traveller and naturalist, visited Scotland in 1769 and 1772
- PERFURNIS, to complete, accomplish
- PERTH BRIDGE. See *Bridge* (at Perth), etc.
- PETROMEL, a horseman's pistol, short carbine
- PINKERTON, JOHN, author of two or three books on the *History of Scotland* (1790-1797)
- PINKER, a head-dress worn by ladies of rank
- PINN, to WIND A, to unravel a difficulty
- PLOUGH-GRAITH, plough fittings
- PONTEN SANCTI, etc. (p. 412), the great bridge of St. John at Perth
- PORT, gate of a city
- POSTULATE, a candidate or petitioner for some ecclesiastical benefice
- POTTER-CARRIER, an apothecary
- POTTINGAR, a pottage maker, cook — in this novel an apothecary POTTINGAR, the calling of an apothecary
- POTTLE-POT, a large tankard, holding two quarts
- POUNCET BOX, a box for holding perfumes
- POUND SCOTS = 1s. 8d. English
- PRANK, deck in a showy manner, make ostentatious show
- PRECISIAN a strict observer of moral rules
- PRECOGNITION, a preliminary examination, official inquiry
- PRIOR, MAT, a witty poet (1664-1721)
- PRIVADO, a minion, favourite
- PROFANE, a gift, present
- PROXIMUS EST, etc. (p. 444), Next is the subterranean dungeon, or, as the Moors call it, *mazmorra*
- PTISAN, a cooling drink made of barley and other ingredients
- PYKE, pain
- QUEAM, a wench, woman of doubtful reputation
- QUA, who
- QUAINE, whose
- QUHARR, where, to which
- RANFAUGE, to storm and scold
- RANNOCH, a wild mountainous district in the north west of Perthshire
- RAX, to reach, stretch, hand
- REBECK, a three-stringed musical instrument of the viol class
- RECREATMENT, entertain ment, amusement
- REKE, counsel, advice
- REIV, or REIVE, robbery
- REIST AIR SON EACHIN, again for Hector
- REIVING, marauding, plundering; REIVER, a marauder
- REMEDIE, or REMED, a remedy
- REQUIEM ETERNAM DONA, grant eternal rest
- REVENANT, one that has come back to life
- ROBERTSON, WILLIAM, author of a celebrated *History of Scotland* (1758-59)
- ROBERT THE DEVI, the first Duke of Normandy, called thus because of his cruelty and audacity
- ROCHINBOY WOOD. See *note* 67, p. 453
- ROOF TREE, the ridge-beam, the roof itself
- ROOPING crying out hoarsely, croaking
- ROUSE, a bumper
- ROWAN-TREE, mountain-ash, a twig of which was in Scotland esteemed a specific against all kinds of evil spirits
- SACKLESS, innocent
- ST BARR, or FINBARR, first bishop of Cork, in Ireland, lived in the 6th century
- ST CRISPIN, though noble-born, made shoes with his own hands, stealing the leather and giving the shoes away to the poor
- He lived at Solasone in France in the 3d century
- ST JOHNSTONE, the old name of Perth
- ST JOHN'S-WORT, a species of *Hypericum*, accounted a specific against witchcraft and other malignant influences
- ST. LEONARD'S CRAIG, a part of the Queen's Park, encircling Arthur's Seat, Edinburgh, where duels were often fought
- ST RINGAM, or NIMIAN, Scottish saint of the 4th and 5th centuries
- SALVAGE, rude, uncivilised
- SANTA MARIA, ORA PRO NOBIS Holy Mary pray for us
- SARABAND, a Spanish dance
- SAESSEACH, Saxon, f.c. Englishman or Lowlander of Scotland
- SCOTCH MILE = about nine furlongs
- SEAMACHIE, a Highland genealogist or chronicler
- SECRET a light and flexible shirt of chain mail, worn under the jerkin

- SECRETIS**, A, a private secretary
- SEID SVAS**, strike up (the music)
- SELCOUTH**, strange, unusual
- SEMPLE**, one of humble birth
- SENECA**, a Roman philosopher (4 B.C. to 65 A.D.), some of whose writings inculcate the noblest self-sacrifice and breathe the tenderest consolation
- SHEELING**, or **SHEALING**, a hut
- SHOGGING**, jogging, moving away
- SHORED CROSS**, a cross that is propped or supported
- 'SIGHS OF WAR AROUND'**, etc (p 235), from *Richard II* Act II. sc 2
- SIR HUON OF BORDEAUX**, hero of a mediæval romance of chivalry
- SIR PINDARUS OF TROY**, represented in the mediæval romances as a go-between
- SIRVENTE**, the favourite form of song current amongst the troubadours
- SI SINUS RUBESCENS**, etc (p 448), If the hand is reddish where the iron touched, he is esteemed guilty, but if it is whole, praise is rendered unto God
- SKENE**, or **SKEAN**, a Highlander's dagger, **SKENE-OCLE**, knife of the arm-pit, the Highlander's stiletto
- SLOGAN**, a war-cry, rallying-cry
- SLOWHOUND**, a sleuth-hound, one that hunts by scent
- SMACK**, a contemptible fellow
- 'SNAILS**, His (i.e. Christ's) nails, with which He was nailed to the Cross
- SOLDAN**, or **SULTAN**, a Mohammedan sovereign
- SOMEDEAL**, somewhat, something
- SORNER**, a sponger, one who exacts free lodgings. *See also* Note 24, p 443
- SPAIN**, **INVIDELS BROUGHT INTO** (p 372) Count Julian invited the Moors into Spain because his sovereign, Roderick, king of the Visigoths, ravished his daughter Florida
- SPOBBAN**, a Highlander's purse, pouch
- STEEL HAND OF CARSLOGIE**. *See* Carslogie
- STRICKLER**, the second in a single combat. *See* Note 33, p 441
- STIGMATA**, marks of blood, blood-stains
- STINT**, to stop
- STR**, to disturb, interfere with
- STERLING BRIDGE** (p 17), the conventional boundary between the Highlands and the Lowlands
- STOUTHRIEF**, theft with violence
- STOWED THE LUGS**, cropped, cut off the ears
- STRATH**, a valley through which a river runs, **STRATHERN**, or **STRATH-EARN**, the valley of the river Earn, **STRATHMORE**, a wide valley lying north-west of the Sidlaw Hills, in Scotland
- STRAW**, JACK, one of the popular leaders in Wat Tyler's rebellion, 1381
- STYPTIC**, a remedy for stopping the flow of blood from a wound
- SUCCIED**, fell, accrued
- SUPER TOTAM MATERIAM**, totally, with respect to the whole affair
- SWALLOW-TAILS**, arrows
- SWASHING**, blustering, bragging
- SWEET-GALE**, the bog-myrtle
- SWINGED**, soundly beaten, chastised
- TA**, the one
- TAISHATAR**, a Highland seer
- TANTALLOON**, on the south shore of the Firth of Forth, near North Berwick
- TENDERED**, regarded with solicitude, cherished
- TENT** (a wound), to probe a wound
- TERMAGAUNT** *See* Mahound
- TESTER**, an old French silver coin, worth about sixpence
- THIGGER**, a beggar who uses threats and intimidation *See* Note 24, p 443
- THORN**, **MOOR OF**, about 4 miles south-east of Dunkeld. *Compare* Note 57, p 452
- THRAW**, to thwart, oppose
- THRETTY**, thirty
- THREW**, to distort, bend
- THRUMS**, loose threads, ends
- TINE-EGAN**, a magical invocation of evil spirits practised in the Highlands
- TIRLE**, to twirl
- TIRRIE**, a violent outburst of passion
- TOCHER**, a dowry
- TOP**, a fox
- TOLBOOTH**, a prison
- TORWOOD**, a forest, now cut down, between Falkirk and Stirling
- TRELLAGE**, trellis-work
- TROY TO RUINS** (p 372), through the forcible theft of Helen by Paris of Troy
- TRUCE OF GOD**, from the 10th to the 13th century, a mutual agreement to abstain from warfare on certain days and at certain seasons
- TUILLIE**, a brawl, street-fight
- UGERO**, **THE DANE**, or **OGIER THE DANE**, hero of a mediæval romance of chivalry
- UMQUHLE**, late, deceased
- USQUEBAUGH**, whisky
- VENIT EXTREMA DIES**, the last day has come
- VERVAIN**, a kind of verbenæ, a specific against witchcraft
- VESTIARY**, a room for keeping clothes, a tiring-room
- WAGIT**, hired
- WALAWA**, woe! lo! woe! Now usually written well-a-day!
- WARE**, or **WAUR**, worse
- WARLOCK**, wizard
- WARSTLE**, a wrestle, personal struggle
- WASSAIL**, ale flavoured with sugar and spices, any intoxicating liquor
- WASTEL BREAD**, a kind of fine white bread
- WEAN**, a small child
- WEAPON-SHAWING**, or **WAPEN-SHAW**, a periodical review of arms, a rendezvous for military exercises
- WEIRD** *See* Dreed a sore weird
- WELKED**, or **WHELKED**, marked with whelks or blisters
- WEM**, a scar, blemish
- WEIRD**, or **WEIRD**, fate, doom
- WERIS**, wars
- WIGHT**, a fellow, person
- WINTON**, or **WYNTOUN**, **ANDREW OF**, a rhyming chronicler of Scotland of the end of the 14th century
- WOMEN OF GOOD**, or **GUDE**, women of respectability, good reputation
- WROCHT**, wrought, caused
- YAUULD**, yielded, gave up

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